

THE SOUL OF MAN.

THE SOUL OF MAN

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TO
HIS SERENE HOLINESS
THE SWAMI BRAHMANANDAJI
PRESIDENT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT
RAMAKRISHNANANDA

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PREFACE

This little book, comprising the four lectures delivered by me during the last Christmas, is intended for all humanity. It contains the gospel of the ancient sages of India that declares in the most unequivocal language the eternal, all-knowing and all-blissful nature of man. According to them, man is rooted not in food and drink, not in climate and soil, not in body and mind, not in space and time but in *Sat* or Spirit which is absolutely one, without a second. Such good news they have brought to us after having realised their own eternal, all-blissful and all-knowing nature so that we also may be saved from the false fear of death and countless other miseries. These realisations constitute the ancient science of the Veda,

consisting of two parts, the first of which is called the Veda proper or Karmakanda, and the second of which is called the Vedanta or Gnana-kanda. From this last part we learn that true happiness, true knowledge and true life, should be sought inside one's own self and not outside. But alas ! almost all the men of the world are exactly doing the opposite. They cannot even imagine themselves to be immortal and consider such a claim to be but a madman's dream. They are perfectly sure about the limited nature of their body and mind, and as such, regard the world to be their home-wherefrom alone they expect to get knowledge and happiness which they so much long for. By self, they understand nothing more than this little 'I' bounded on both sides by birth and death, and the more the darkness of ignorance thickens around them, the more they make much of this poor

little thing of an ego. Thus we see that ignorance which is the cause of all miseries has been troubling all men from the very beginning of time in the form of Ego which has made the eternal appear as non-eternal, the all-blissful appear as miserable, the all-knowing appear as ignorant, the all-powerful appear as weak, the infinite appear as finite, and the master appear as slave. Hence the one duty of every man should be to eradicate this Ego rooted in ignorance, with the axe of wisdom which teaches that man is infinite by his nature.

But the man of the world has been loving this Ego so very fondly not for one but for countless lives, that it is almost impossible for him to separate himself from its fell clutch. Some may intellectually comprehend its baneful nature and thus may have a mind to get rid of it, but when they make an attempt in that direction,

they come away baffled, owing to its almost irresistible charm. For, is it not a fact that on this Ego alone is based man's imaginary heaven, which he blindly regards to be permanent, and in which he finds his wife, children, friends, neighbours, name, fame, and countless other things that make even this precarious life so sweet and dear to him?

Almost all the men of the world being so, how can this little book which preaches the renunciation of egoism following the footsteps of the hoary sages of India, be of any use to humanity which is not going to profit by its impracticable advice? In answer we say, man may not have a heart to follow the *path* marked herein but certainly he is eternally restless for the *goal* that has been held out to him by the sages, and if nothing short of that goal can bring complete satisfaction to him, and if there is no other path

leading to it, he must be made to go through it somehow or other. He may not have a heart at present to take up the path, but in this or some other future incarnation of him, when his imaginary heaven will appear to him in its true colour, then the knowledge of the path leading to salvation will be a great boon to him ; and so although this book can help only a few directly, it can certainly help everyone indirectly. With this hope, it has been made to see the light, and to make it more acceptable to the modern readers, the truths of the ancient Science have been garbed in the language of modern Science, as far as it has proved practicable. So without further preface let this little book speak for itself.

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THE AUTHOR.

Om Namo Bhagavate Ramakrishnaya

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All are mad, some after money, some after enjoyments, some after name and fame etc. Be not mad after the unreal, the transitory, but after the Real and the Eternal.

Sri Ramakrishna.

MODERN Science starts with two hypotheses, or as it wants to have them called, two primary facts. Man is one and the Universe around is another. What does it understand by 'Man'? An embodied being, a Mr. So., & So., having a certain nationality, a faith, and a creed. In short it understands by the word 'Man' an ordinary man of the world with sound common sense. Man is he who sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches by means of his senses and thinks, feels, and wills by means of his mind ; and whatever he can observe and experiment upon

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by means of these senses, he regards that to be a fact, a reality—nay everything must have to come down to the level of his senses, in order to be regarded as a reality, as these alone have the power of establishing its existence by observations and experiments.

He also finds himself to be full of various wants, nay, he finds his whole life to be a series of almost incalculable wants, and to his great relief he finds out at the same time that the world around him has the power to remove them. But although he finds the world to be perfectly capable of removing them, he must have to force it to do so. He must have to fight with his environment in order to get from it all that he wants. By mere coaxing words he can get nothing out of it. He must have to wage an incessant war with it to get all' he desires. That is why Charles Darwin, the father of modern evolutionism, has described life as a "struggle for existence"; and he has pointed out that only the fittest survive amidst such a struggle. The poet also has described

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the world to be a battle field in the following simple and forcible language :—

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife !

Whether he wills or not, constituted as he is, he cannot keep quiet here, as that means death to him. He wants to gather power, and he finds out that knowledge brings that much-needed power to him. Formerly electricity used to be regarded as only a destructive force. But now that men have been able to know something about it, they have been able to make it very useful, as carrier of their messages, as motor power of their carriages, as illuminer of their cities and towns. The knowledge of steam power has incredibly facilitated their communication from one place to another ; and thus they are very hopeful of getting almost all things necessary from the knowledge of the universe in the near future. That is why there is an incessant struggle going on between

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man and nature : and as a result of such struggle, man has been able to evolve science or right knowledge about persons and things. Wanting to know about the heavenly bodies, he has evolved Astronomy ; wanting to know about the animal kingdom he has evolved Zoology; wanting to know about the vegetable kingdom he has evolved Botany ; wanting to know the elements out of which the world has come into existence, the laws which govern everything around him, the constitution of his physical organism and the method of its working, the constitution of the world in which he lives and so on, he has evolved Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy, Physiology, Geology, etc.

By studying matter he has found out its indestructible nature. Although the candle has been burnt out, by weighing the gaseous product of the burnt candle he has found out that not a particle has been lost. Thus matter being indestructible is real and all material bodies are, on that account, real as well; and as the universe is composed of material bodies only it also must

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be real. By the study of this material universe we get whatever we want, hence its study is absolutely necessary. Speculation about the eternal nature of souls etc., is useless, as being immaterial they cannot be brought within the scope of observation and experiment. Now what sort of a universe has been given to us by our modern science? Assuredly a soulless one. It is a universe that does not respond to our call; we ourselves must have to get out of it all that we want by sheer exertions, both physical and mental. Again universe is so very infinitely vast, and our capacities are so very deplorably limited that it is absurd on our part to entertain any hope of knowing it as a whole and hence our knowledge about it will always remain undesirably partial.

The indestructibility of matter was not unknown to our most ancient sages. Kapila, Gautama, Kanada, Patanjali, Jaimini and many others knew its indestructible nature. By way of illustration, I should like to narrate to you the incidents that almost destroyed the

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dynasty of the Yadavas by bringing to an end the blissful career (Leela) of Sri Krishna and all His relatives, children and grandchildren. Knowing the all-powerful Rama and Krishna to be their Saviours in all crises, their children, and grand-children became very proud, insolent and irreverent. They used to spend their time mostly in mirth and jollity. Of all the children of Sri Krishna, Samba was the most beautiful, and one day some of the youthful children of Sri Krishna dressed him as a female big with child, an iron mace serving the purpose of his embryo, and they took him to almost every house in Dwaraka to know, whether the inmates who had known Samba very well, could make him out in his new garb, and when they failed to do so, the jolly party was having a very good laugh at their cost. When they were thus marching from one house to another, they came across the great sage Durvasa and such was their insolence and irreverence that they took Samba even before him and wanted to know what child the seeming woman would give.

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birth to. At this, the sage who was naturally of a highly choleric temper, came to know all about the fraud by his natural insight, and replied "The child that this seeming woman "will give birth to, will bring about the "destruction of all of you and the whole "family to which you belong, you stupid and "irreverent fellows!" Then they were all taken aback and knowing that their irreverence and vanity had brought down the wrath of the Brahmana upon the whole family, were sorely afraid, and went directly to Baladeva's house to be advised as to what was to be done to obviate the curse. Hearing all, Baladeva told them to rub the mace out on a stone and then there would remain nothing to be feared as the mace itself, the cause of their anxiety, would not be in existence to bring any trouble to them. Accordingly, they went to a river side and rubbed the whole mace out in a short time, and threw away a very small, insignificant portion deeming it to be quite harmless and returned home very glad. But they did not know that

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the very minute particles of the rubbed out mace grew into a forest of reeds on the river side and the remaining small bit of the mace was swallowed up by a fish which afterwards was caught by a fisherman. When its body was cut open, the little piece was found out by the fisherman and he gave it away to an archer who made an arrow-head out of it.

After a few weeks Rama and Krishna with their whole family had a grand picnic very near the place where the mace had been rubbed out. Wine was freely circulated amongst the whole party. At first, all were very jolly. Then they began to find fault with one another which ended in a bloody quarrel. In the scuffle that ensued they used up all their weapons and found nothing but the reeds that were standing hard by. They rushed towards them and each one plucked a reed wherewith to strike his opponent. Whoever was even slightly struck with one of them had to fall down dead on account of the irresistible curse of the sage. In a few minutes, all died except Rama and Krishna who did not take

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part in the quarrel, but simply sat quiet to see the destruction of all their children. When death brought silence over the whole place, Rama went out of his body by yoga and Sri Krishna seeing himself left alone climbed a young fig tree and sat on a branch with one of his legs hanging down. His dangling and beautiful foot was mistaken by an archer, who was at a distance, for a very beautiful bird of blue feathers and red breast and so he shot at it that arrow whose head was made out of the last remnant of the destructive mace. As soon as the arrow struck his foot, He fell down from his seat, but did not leave his body at once as He wanted to see His friend Arjuna so that He might leave instructions to him to take care of His old father, mother and wives.

The above narrative shows the indestructible nature of matter. However you may try to destroy it, it will baffle all your attempts to do so. Some years ago, the chemists believed that they arrived at a final division of matter which could not be divided any more, and which, on

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that account, they named atom (*Gr. a, not and temnein, to cut*) ; but after the discovery of electrons, which are finer than atoms, that theory has fallen to the ground. Again, etherial particles are regarded as even finer than electrons, and perhaps some still finer particles may be discovered in the future which will make even ether appear as coarse. Thus, however, you may go on regarding matter to be finer and finer, you can never make it nothing. It will always, remain something, and baffle all your attempts to destroy it. Thus, modern material science has not been able to arrive at a final division of matter and so it has no firm ground to stand upon, and as such, it is unreliable and empirical.

But let us take up the conclusion of science and see whether we can make anything out of it. We have learned from it the indestructible nature of matter, and also its ever-shifting, ever-changing nature. Every material form is liable to change. Heat expands and cold contracts it. It admits of any number of divisions. The big ones become smaller, the smaller, still smaller,

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and so on. So it is constantly changing. Now let us analyse the phenomenon of change. Whenever any form changes into another, the old form exists no more or dies, and a new form comes to exist or is born. So the words 'birth and death' may be substituted for the word "change." Thus we see that every material form has to change or die unceasingly on a background which is changeless or birth-and-deathless. On account of this birth-and-deathless or eternal background the ever-dying material form is saved from destruction, as it is inseparably united with it amidst all its vicissitudes.

Now let us see what sort of a thing this eternal background is. Is it formful? No, as, in that case it would also have to die like that which rests upon it. Hence it must be formless; and as every form is limited, that which is formless must be limitless or infinite. The finite form exists on this infinite background, but where does this latter exist? Does it exist in space and time? It cannot,

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since space whose existence depends upon the co-existence of things and time whose existence depends upon succession of events are not independent, hence have beginnings and ends, or in other words, are finite. How can the infinite one live in the finite ? Space begins to exist after the co-existence of things and ceases to exist when that co-existence ceases. Time begins to exist when two events occur one after another, and ceases to exist when no such succession takes place. Again, when two things co-exist, they must be known to exist together and so one of them must be the knower, and then the other can be known and knowledge takes place only in mind. So space conception must be in the mind. Succession of events, bringing along with it two or more different ideas, also presupposes the existence of mind, for how can there be an idea without a mind to give birth to it ? Hence also time conception exists in mind. Therefore, both space and time exist in mind. But is mind limited or limitless ; that it is limited requires no

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proof, and as such you cannot localise the limitless one in it. Now, what else is there besides the mind, the space, the time, and the universe existing in them ? It is the Self that only remains. Is this Self limited or limitless ? Self is beyond the three *gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*, or the three bodies, gross, subtle, and causal, or the five *kosas* or sheaths, and therefore having nothing to limit it, it is limitless. Here, therefore, we can localise the limitless back-ground of limited material forms. But you may say that two infinities may clash against each other. Hence they cannot live together as one and the same, but must live separately. Let us take your affirmation for granted and let us then examine its validity. According to you, there are two infinities, one is conscious, the back-ground of all individual selves, the other is unconscious, the back-ground of all material forms and let them be called A and B respectively. We have already shown that A & B are beyond space and time. So, where A and B are, there is neither space nor

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time. Let us, therefore, not imagine that A and B live separately just as you and I are doing. Between you and me, space, one of the greatest separating principles, intervenes, and therefore only our separation is possible. If there remains no space between yourself and myself, we must have to be one. But you may say that although we may thus seem as one still, we keep up our two separate individualities, and thus if we eliminate space away from between A and B, they may appear as one, but they are really two entities. To this we say, as far as space is concerned, you are perfectly right, but by hypothesis, we must have to eliminate time, another separating principle like space, from between A and B. In that case there should not be two distinct or mutually exclusive ideas conveyed by A and B, as two ideas coming one after another will keep up the idea of time, which we want to eliminate. Hence A and B must be absolutely one, or Infinity must be absolutely one ; and being conscious of this oneness or changelessness or

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birth-and-death-lessness, it is infinitely and eternally blissful. It is the one Soul both of mind and matter, of the internal and the external universe. There is not a single material particle, however minute it may be, more minute than an electron, more minute than an etherial particle even, which is not ensouled by it. That is why our forefathers used to find God everywhere throughout the whole universe. Although it is the one formless background of the whole universe, in different forms it appears differently. To an ordinary man, who distinguishes one object, from another, and one form from another, to whom the sun is not the same as the moon, the male is not the same as the female, etc, it appears differently in different forms. Moreover, an ordinary man of the world is concerned with forms which he loves most dearly. He loves the forms of his parents, wife, children, friends, neighbours, and all the beautiful and charming forms wherever they are to be found. This is why that Infinite one, incarnating Itself as a Teacher

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has taught to the men of the world “ Amongst
“ the luminous bodies I am the Sun, . . .
“ amongst the mountains I am the Himalayas . .
“ amongst the trees, I am the fig tree etc.
“ Whatever is grand and glorious, charming and
“ majestic, know Arjuna, all that has come out
“ of a part of My own infinite power.” Thus
we have been taught from time immemorial to
worship each grand and glorious phenomenon
in nature as God Himself.

The old Vedic Sages are looked upon with
pity by the western scholars, as according to
the latter, these baby-like people had no idea of
God and therefore had to personify as living
Gods the inanimate powers of nature. After
what we have learned just now this commissera-
tion on the part of the western scholars is
absolutely groundless and if any man is to be
pitied it is he who has allowed his ignorance to
drive the soul out of the entire universe and
place him inside a dead body making him as
soulless and dead as the body itself. The
Vedic Sage never personified natural forces..

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Personification is mere imagination. It is imagining life where there is really none. But if one sees a *living* being as living, there is no personification. The Vedic Sage actually saw a living sun, a living moon, nay a living universe. Did Prahlada imagine a living God in the stone pillar ? If it were mere imagination, then out of it nothing could come out, as imagination is entirely false. He saw the living God inside the pillar, and so the living God had to come out of it to save his loving devotee.

Thus we have seen God to be eternal and infinite. Is He one with our souls ? In that case, every one of us would be all-knowing like Him and there would not be any variety of souls. But that is not a fact. No man, as man, is all-knowing. When he frees himself from the limitations of body and mind, even in this life, by means of one-pointed concentration (yoga) he is then not a man ; he is one with the Infinite One and hence becomes all-knowing. But an ordinary man who identifies himself with his body and mind both of which

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are limited, must have limited knowledge, and so he has. Is he also limited in his life? So long as he identifies himself with his body he has his birth and death. But he is not only an embodied being but also a thinker i.e., he not only identifies himself with his body, but also with his mind. Moreover in his healthy or natural condition he seldom identifies himself with his body, for the idea that he has got a body only comes to him when he is reminded of it by some local pain such as headache, colic, etc., or when the whole of it is burning as it were, under a very high fever; or, in other words, the idea of his having a body only comes to him in his unhealthy or unnatural condition; whereas in his healthy or natural condition, he feels as if he has no body; so the natural man is more a mind than a body. With the help of this mind he is able to discriminate the permanent from the impermanent, the real from the unreal; and when he goes on examining and analysing himself with the help of it, he finds out that he is made up of three factors—he himself,

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his mind, and his body. He again finds out that his body is very changeful. It is incessantly changing from its embryonic condition throughout its babyhood, boyhood, youth, manhood etc., and he finds out also that his mind is changing along with it as well. But though his body and mind may be changing he knows himself to be the same man, the one man who was once a baby, then a boy, then a young man, and now has become a grown-up man and he has not changed along with the changes of his body and mind ; and so he finds out that he is the one changeless factor amidst the two other ever-changing factors. Now, whenever we observe for a certain length of time a particular thing to be behaving in the same uniform manner, we cannot help believing that it will be going on in the same manner always, as there is an innate belief in the uniformity of nature's workings in every living being, not only in men but even in lower animals. This intuitive faith enables us to determine the nature of everything and

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makes the existence of science possible. When therefore I see that I remain changeless, though my body and mind are incessantly changing all throughout my lifetime, I cannot help determining my nature to be changeless or birth-and-death-less or eternal.

Man, by a little self-examination, is thus able to make out his eternal nature, but he cannot realise his infinite nature, until he transcends the limitations of his body and mind. This is the most difficult of all human achievements.

The next consideration is that, if he is eternal, he must have been existing previous to his present life and that he is going to exist even after it. Was he invested with a similar body and mind in his previous state of existence? A little self-examination again on the part of every man will show him that according to his actions, he reaps the fruits. His good actions bring forth good and desirable fruits, and his evil actions bring forth evil and undesirable fruits. Another fact is, as we have just now seen, that the eternal and infinite

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Being, whom we call God, equally existing everywhere, must be equally disposed towards all living beings. In him, there cannot be any partiality, as being infinite, His love towards all His creatures must be infinite. From such a God we can never expect any difference of treatment as regards his children. Then how to account for the various conditions of his children? We see that one is in a very affluent circumstance, while another by him is starving even from birth, one is honoured and respected, another is insulted and vilified, one is happy, another is miserable, one is wise, another is an idiot, one is strong, another is weak. Since these different circumstances must therefore be the results of different sorts of action on the part of God's children themselves, they must have been done in a previous state of existence; and as no action is possible without a body and a mind, the soul must have had a similiar body and mind previous to the present embodied condition. Thus, my present body has resulted from

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a past body, and similarly, my past body also was a result of a previously existing body and so on *regressus ad infinitum*.

Our future condition of existence too must be an embodied condition like the present, as, when we leave this body, we carry along with us innumerable unfulfilled desires which we try our best to satisfy in the present life but never succeed in doing so. These unfulfilled desires therefore, must make us search another living organism with the help of which to satisfy them; and we must have to take up bodies after bodies until we shall be able to realise our all-perfect nature, free from all wants, all desires. Hence Palingenesis is an established fact. This is the discovery of the ancient science. Upon this fact, the whole of the Veda is based. This is the one distinguishing feature of the Vedic religion from all the other religions of the world except Buddhism and religions analogous to it.

We are now in a position to understand the ancient science of the Veda. Both science and

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Veda have come from roots meaning the same thing. The Veda or ancient science differs from modern science in regarding the external and internal universe to be pervaded by God. The ever-helpful Veda, knowing the limited capacity of an ordinary human mind, has not brought forth for it a limitless God, but has given to it only, that much of Him in His various manifestations which it can perfectly grasp, love and then realise. Man has got innumerable wants and the infinitely loving God also has innumerable powers to satisfy all those wants and even more. Behind each of his innumerable powers He exists, and so each such power may be regarded as a separate God united in one Supreme Lord of the whole universe. This does not mean polytheism. Thus for the benefit of all men, the Veda has brought God nearer home to them than any other scripture of the world. Modern science has localised consciousness, intelligence and many noble and ignoble qualities in men and men alone, depriving the whole universe of them.

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The ancient science, on the other hand, has seen the One, all-perfect, all-knowing, all-powerful Being, pervading and enlivening the entire cosmos as well as all the living beings that dwell in it. The votary of the modern science has to bring forth all his conscious energies out of his little limited self to subdue and bring the world under his control. The votary of the ancient science, not only helps himself but gets more help from the living God manifesting himself through his creation in various forms, by subduing his egotism to acquire true knowledge and consequent blissfulness springing therefrom. Modern science has given only a limited life to man, bounded on both sides by birth and death, while the ancient science on the other hand has given eternal life to man by showing death to be merely a gateway to another life, and affirming that he existed and had several births before this birth, and is going to have many more births after until he realises his infinite nature. For men of higher capacities too ancient science has reserved the worship of

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the eternal and infinite being, while for some others it has reserved the highest wisdom which enables him to realise his oneness with the infinite being, taking him beyond the limitations of space, time and causation.

Thus we have been taught in the Ishopanishad to see everything changeful in this universe pervaded by one Supreme Soul and the opening verse of *Srimad Bhagavatam* teaches us that although the three-fold manifestations of matter are in themselves changeful and fleeting, yet they appear to be real as the one reality is behind them. From time immemorial, the phenomenal nature of the universe was known to our ancient seers. By studying and analysing some of these phenomena they arrived at the knowledge of one Supreme Being pervading the whole universe. Let us see how it was possible for them to do so. What is a phenomenon ? Is it simple or elementary in its nature or a compound ? Because it is a mere appearance, it cannot exist independently of a knower to whom it must appear and there must be

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something to appear and then, out of their union, an appearance or a phenomenon becomes possible. Hence it is a compound and is made up of three factors, the seer, the object, and that which brings about their union, or as they are called in Sanscrit *Adhyatma*, *Adhibtau* and *Adhidaiva*. We now see that no phenomenon can exist without a seer or soul, hence no phenomenon is soulless or in other words, every phenomenon is infilled with a soul and hence is alive. The universe is made up of innumerable forms, touches, tastes, smells and sounds, which go by the name of phenomena ; and you are the one soul of all these which began to exist with your birth and which will cease to exist with your death, and so, along with you your world rose and along with you it will set. But you know that the world existed before your birth and it will exist even after your death. Indeed you know it to be beginning-less and endless, sometimes manifesting and sometimes unmanifesting itself as one of its factors is the

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indestructible matter which, in Sanscrit, is called *Adhuhuta*, as we have just now learnt. If this beginning-less and endless creation is also an aggregate of innumerable phenomena, it cannot be soulless. It must have a soul of its own which must be beginningless and deathless or eternal, and as it must pervade the entire creation it must be all-pervasive or infinite. This eternal and infinite soul goes by the name of God, the eternal creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. Hence the universe is never Godless or soul-less. It is the manifested and living form of the deity much more living and infinitely more powerful than the living body either belonging to you or me or anyone else. We cannot dissociate Him from the universe just as we cannot dissociate ourselves from our body as long as we deem ourselves to be men. Bhagavan Vyasa, after describing God as having the whole universe for his body the higher-most Heaven forming the crown of his head, and the lower-most sphere (patala) forming the sole of his feet and the intermediate

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spheres, forming the different parts of his body, says in the course of his description that such a vast God lives inside the man. You are not to seek far for him; and he alone can remove all your wants, clear all your doubts, give you eternal bliss and peace, save you once for all from the darkness of ignorance by lighting in the chamber of your heart the eternal lamp of wisdom. This is what the ancient science teaches us. Can we call it old and barbarous as modern science would have it called? We have been taught by modern Biology that many thousands of years before there was no man in this planet of ours, the blind soul was encased in the protoplasmic body of amœba which, in course of time, through a process of almost innumerable evolutions and surviving various struggles has now evolved as man. Thus, according to it, the soul is emerging from outer darkness to more and more light and it must have to remain always limited being the gradual development of something perfectly limited. This conclusion is neither very rational,

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as we have seen, nor at all desirable. So we should not look down upon the conclusions of the ancient science which teaches that the entire universe with all its living beings has come out of the infinite Wisdom of God, the source of all life, light, peace and blissfulness. He, the soul of our souls, is inside ourselves. From him alone we can get whatever we want ; hence we must have to make friends with Him by loving Him more than we love the world with all its charms, that is, more than we love our earthly friends, and relatives, more than we love all enjoyments of the senses, nay more than we love ourselves.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna once gave us a fine parable and that is this. One morning two young friends went out for a walk. When they had gone a certain distance, they came by a very beautiful garden and as the gate was open and there was none to prevent their going in they were tempted to enter in. Everything was so very beautiful all round and everything appeared to be so very friendly that they walked a considerable distance inside it till one of them

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who was of a calculating nature told his other friend "I want to estimate the value of this beautiful garden, I want to know the number of mango trees and cocoanut trees etc. So please dear friend, you walk alone hither and thither for some time till I come back." So saying he left his side and when the latter found himself alone he wanted to go more inside. He saw a gardener working at a distance and went up to him and began to make enquiries about the proprietor of the garden. The kind gardener told him about the infinite goodness of his master and said "My master is always kind towards everyone who goes to him. He never leaves this garden. You can go and see him if you like. Please proceed a few steps forward and you will be able to see the nice little mansion where he always stays." Thus informed, the man thanking the gardener hastened for the mansion and reached it in a few minutes. Entering it he found the master, a beautiful-looking, simple, and sweet gentleman, sitting in the front room, as if waiting for him. As soon as he

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entered, the proprietor got up and received him very kindly and asked him to sit down near him, talked so kindly to him that they became friends in no time. The master took his new friend by the hand, showed the many beautiful shrubs, plants, rare flowers and fruits, made him taste some very fine fruits, gave him a few fine and rare flowers to take home, and asked him to come there often and often. After enjoying his company for some time, the young man took leave of him expressing his gratefulness for the kind treatment which he had just received from the good man's hand. On his way back he saw his friend coming back after a fruitless attempt to calculate the number of trees, for the garden was a very big one. When the latter saw his friend well refreshed and having some fine flowers with him and came to know about his new friendship with the proprietor of the garden he could not help crying out "oh what a fool I have been to have wasted my time in this way. You are really wise, my friend. Yours is the enjoyment, mine is mere trouble."

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From this parable we learn, that the calculating spirit of modern science will never bring any definite knowledge to it and it will always have to remain in the same darkness, in spite of its partial and very few victories over some of nature's forces which it has got. So, if we want to be really happy and really wise, if we want to escape repeated births and deaths we should follow the path shown to us by the ancient science or the Veda. Blessed are they who obey the Vedic injunctions ; for it is they that will be ultimately illumined and saved after clearly understanding the hollowness of earthly as well as heavenly enjoyments. For man who wants to be eternally happy guided by the Veda, finds after enjoying heavenly life for several times that even Heaven cannot be his permanent abode which he so much longs for and so goes to the higher teachings to be found in the latter portion of it. After following those teachings he ultimately realises everything in himself and becomes perfect.

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Everything in this world has got its own peculiarity which distinguishes it from every other thing. This peculiarity determines its tendency. The mango on the branch has a tendency to go down and the smoke which is hotter than the surrounding atmosphere has a tendency to go up as long as it is hot. But in such cases neither the mango nor the smoke knows its own tendencies, as it is unconscious. This unconscious tendency, virtue or quality inherent in things is properly the subject of modern science. But this morning we are to deal with conscious tendencies, tendencies which are inherent in conscious beings, tendencies which are cognised by the individual, that possesses them. There are many people in the

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world who arrogate consciousness only to themselves and not to the lower animals and thus they are bold enough to say that the lower animals have no souls. How can such people ever imagine trees and plants to have souls? But we have been taught by our forefathers that not only human beings, not only the lower animals but even trees and plants have souls. They are conscious. We can determine the tendencies of lower animals as well as trees and plants by studying them, for their tendencies are not very many. But when we come to determine the tendencies of man, we find a real difficulty, for the tendency of every man is different from that of his brother man. The tendencies of those who are moral are diametrically opposite to those of men who are immoral and so on ; and thus when we want to determine the tendencies of all humanity it appears to be next to an impossibility to do so.

Looking at our religious faiths we find out that some people belonging to a certain religion hold views exactly opposite to those of others

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believing in another religion. While some hold that God has forms, some others hold that it is a sin to invest Him with a form ; and all act according to their own convictions. But although, when we try to study the various tendencies of human beings, we find that it is not possible for us to determine them, we arrive at such conclusions, only because we have not gone very near to the question. A village market appears from a distance as nothing but a chaos, but when we come near it, it does not appear to be so. The dealers are selling their articles systematically and everything there seems to be in perfect order. A thing from a distance always creates some confused ideas in us, but when we approach it and examine properly, we find that everything is systematic and well regulated. Our Great Master Sri Ramakrishna tells us, " If you look at the sea from a distance you will not be able to understand that the whole sea is full of salt. Because you cannot see the stars in the day, you cannot come to the conclusion that the sky is without

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them." So if we want to study anything from a distance we are apt to misunderstand it and hence such a study always proves to be almost fruitless ; but when we come very near the object, then we find that there is law and system behind it.

Man is active by his very nature. And what is the meaning of his activity? Why is he active at all? Activity presupposes want. Whenever we work, we work for something. And what is that thing which man wants? This is not a difficult question to answer, for every one knows what he wants. Man wants to be happy, and therefore whenever he wants happiness, he must exert himself in order to get it. So behind every activity in man we find there is want, and when we try to find out what it is, we find that he wants only three things. Firstly he wants to be happy ; secondly he wants to know all, and thirdly he wants to live for ever. These are the three wants and they bring out or call forth all his activities and latent energies. He wants to be happy and finds out that he is

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surrounded on all sides mostly by such circumstances that do not make him happy. So he finds out that he must struggle against such environments to get the happiness, that is lurking behind. In the same manner his love for life makes him struggle for it. He wishes to live the longest term of life, and therefore struggles to find out all those means that will enable him to live healthily for the longest period of time. Health brings happiness and ill-health makes him miserable. So he wants to be healthy. He does not want to go away from the world, where he finds his real home. He again comes to know that knowledge is power and power will bring him happiness, power will make him lord over and independent of all untoward circumstances and so he wants to attain power through knowledge. Thus he has got an innate hankering after knowledge. All these wants make him constantly restless. He calls forth all his energies and with their help struggles to remove these wants.

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This struggle is what is called Life. It is going on not only amongst human beings but also amongst the lower animals.

Now if we want to determine the nature of a certain animal, we do it by studying its likes and dislikes. Whatever it likes we know it is natural and whatever it dislikes we know that it is unnatural to it. To find out our own nature therefore is not very difficult. What do we like most? We like happiness most and therefore to be happy is our nature. We like knowledge most and therefore to be all-knowing is our nature. We like life most and therefore to live is our nature and not to die. By studying our nature in this way our old forefathers found out the true nature of the soul. Because the soul likes to be and never not to be, being is its nature, which in Sanskrit is called *Sat*. Because its nature is to be all-knowing, it is called *Chit*. Because happiness is its nature it is therefore called *Anandam*. Thus it has been called *Sat-Chit-Anandam*. It is found not only in human beings but also in lower animals and

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even in trees and plants, and so we have been taught by our great teachers, such as Sri Krishna and others :—" God is living in the heart of all living beings and it is He who is determining all their movements." And if that soul is in lower animals, as well as in trees and plants, their nature and human nature must essentially be the same. Wherever there is any conscious movement of any sort in the animal and in the vegetable kingdom, every such movement is due either to get happiness or to acquire knowledge or to save life. But we are apt to arrogate to ourselves all consciousness and all knowledge ; and we regard the lower animals to have only some instincts. If we just study their nature we shall be able to find out for ourselves that it does not differ essentially in any way from our nature.

The little ant is moving in a hurry before me. Why ? Perhaps it wants a grain of sugar that will make it happy, and so it is searching for it. It goes and catches hold of a certain thing thinking it to be the much-longed for

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particle, but examining it to be something else gives it up and goes to another place. In that way the ant goes from one place to another, till at last it comes to the thing it wants—the little particle of sugar. The same thing is being done by a great Yogi, while the Yogi is trying to realize his highest ideal, which he regards to be all-blissful. The little ant here is trying to get that little particle of sugar the source of all bliss to it, rejecting many other particles which are not sugar particles. This is called the process of "*Neti, Neti*" or "not this, not this", i. e., I do not want anything else but the object of my desire. The Yogi in the mountain cave is also trying to fix his mind in that all-pervading soul. He also says in his mind "Let no other idea come to disturb me than the one ideal which I am trying to realise" and in this way he is constantly struggling to realise it. The process is the same. *Anandam* or Bliss is the only one thing which determines all our movements. If you try to injure the ant, it runs away because

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it wants to live and be as happy as you. Now in order to save its life and to make itself happy it must have knowledge sufficient to distinguish happiness from unhappiness, life from death. So Knowledge, Happiness and Being go hand in hand. But the primary thing is bliss. For this we, human beings, along with other living beings are all struggling. And out of such struggles we have evolved all our sciences, with the help of which we are able to minimise the power of misery. So we have seen that the same hankering after eternal Bliss is actuating the movement of an ant. Nay, it is actuating the movement of a plant. The plant loves sunlight and it spreads its branches towards the direction of light. A certain western scholar of experimental philosophy has lately found out that the plants also have the power to understand us, when we praise or find fault with them. This philosopher had two plants very near his room and every day he used to bless a certain plant and curse the other.

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He found out after a month that the plant he used to bless, was growing very lustily, whereas the other plant he used to curse did not grow properly. So we see that the power of understanding is also there. The plants know how to feel happy as well as unhappy. In the course of his teaching about the transcendental nature of the soul (Sat), the sage Aruni, pointing out to Swetaketu, his son, a tree before him, tells his child, "If, my boy, any one slightly injures the big tree before us by an axe or anything else at the root or in the middle or at the top, it will live and not die, but shed (tear-like) drops of juice. You should know from this that it is pervaded all over by the soul and lives happily drinking in profusion, the life-giving water from the earth. If that soul comes away, from one of its branches it dries up, if from another that too dries up, if from a third that also dries up, and if from the whole tree, the whole tree dries up. Thus you should know the tree to be conscious and living." (Chhandogya VI, 11). Happiness always

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makes us expand ourselves, whereas unhappiness or misery makes us contract as it were.

It is indeed a paradox to say that renunciation determines all our tendencies. Men have a great fear to renounce. They grasp firmly everything that they happen to possess. Renunciation is regarded as the exclusive duty of a monk (Sanyasin). A householder should not have anything to do with renunciation. But I tell you that it is the only one thing which determines the movement of all the living beings throughout the universe. We must have to renounce that which cannot give us happiness any more, in order to get something which makes us all happy. Everywhere either in the vegetable or in the animal kingdom the law is the same. One thing in connection with this idea of renunciation is that it is regarded as very difficult and undesirable by most people. For when they look at a Sanyasin with bald head going from house to house to get his meals (*bhiksha*) and when they see that he has nothing to call his own, that he finds his house

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in a *chaltram* or under a tree and that he is looked upon with hatred and pity by most of the well-to-do people, the ordinary man of the world cannot help regarding such a life to be very undesirable, nay, fearful. That the Sanyasin does not put on good clothes, does not get good food, nay, sometimes he has to starve and thus leads a very wretched sort of life, are facts which very few can relish. Every man has a desire for enjoyment. If you have got a certain amount of money, say Rs. 10, in your hand, and I ask you to throw it away you would not do it because money makes you happy. But if I assure you by saying "I will give you Rs. 20 if you do so" you will at once obey me, for by so doing you will get twice as much enjoyment as the amount in your hand can give you. This is exactly what every one does when he renounces, be he a householder or a Sanyasin. In the Chhandogya Upanishad (VII, 23) Bhagavan Sanatkumara is exhorting Narada in this way "That which is vast and limitless is the source of all bliss, there is no bliss in what is limited

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and little. The infinite one alone is bliss; try to realise it"

If you want to realise the highest knowledge, you must give up this little knowledge of yours which is another name for ignorance. We are not disposed to give up the little to accomplish a higher end, overmastered by the nameless power of Maya, which has the power even to delude God himself. We find it narrated in Ka'lika' Purana that when God incarnated as a boar He lifted the earth from the nether worlds and thus made her fit for human habitation. After this grand achievement He did not want to give up His boar's body and had a sow for His wife. Out of her he had many children and he so much forgot his own infinite, and all-blissful nature that he never cared to go back to it for several years. At this, all the other gods did not know what to do. None but God himself has the power to rule over His creation and He forgetting Himself was leading the life of a boar. They also could not approach and ask him to give up that wretched body, for what

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animal could ever want to die, and who, amongst all the minor gods, would be powerful enough to take the boar's body away from the all-powerful Lord of the universe? So Siva had to come and kill the boar with his trident after an arduous fight. That is why God in His Incarnation of Sri Krishna says, "This divine and all-powerful Maya of mine no one can cross over." She represents the infinite power of the Lord and so makes the real appear as unreal and unreal as real, pleasure appear as pain, and pain as pleasure, light appear as darkness and darkness as light, and thus ties everyone to falsehood making him completely forget the truth. In order to make ourselves more happy, more wise, we must have to give up our old ways. Blessed are they who can thus give up, for by such renunciation alone a man can aspire to raise himself higher.

We have seen that we have lost sight of our real nature in the darkness of ignorance. This real nature is called *Sachidanandam*.

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As every struggle physical or mental is intended to make us more expansive and more exalted, blessed is he who struggles. Laziness is that sleep which keeps men immersed in the utter gloom of ignorance, and when a man has been able to shake it off and has learned to struggle with his environment, he is a true fighter. He wants to fight out his cause so that he may recover the lost castle of his glory, where alone he can expect to have all his ideals realised. Thus he goes on struggling. He wants to live, but there is no life, for death is waiting for him. He does not like the idea at all and so struggles to avoid death with little or no success. He wants to know. The more he wants to have knowledge, the more he finds it impossible to realise it. His power is limited and the things he wants to know are innumerable and his life is too short for it. Still there is an infinite hankering after knowledge and life, and he himself is not able to find a way out of this labyrinth of births and deaths. Then he puts this question to himself "Is there no one to guide

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me ? I myself am struggling in vain and the more I struggle, the more I find out that the goal is far away." Thus gradually his vanity is crushed out and he finds that his self-exertion is next to nothing. This was exactly the state of mind Arjuna found himself in, when of his own accord he placed himself entirely under the guidance of his friend and teacher Sri Krishna, by saying, "I do not know how to guide myself, I take refuge at thy feet. Regard me as thy disciple. Please direct me as thou wilt." This becomes the attitude of every man's mind after he has struggled in vain for several lives to realise his goal. Then he earnestly searches for a true Teacher and to his greatest satisfaction finds out that the teacher also is waiting for him.

It is a fact that whenever there is feeling of want in any man there is a corresponding object to satisfy it in the world outside him. If there is hunger here, there is food there ready for you. If there is thirst, there is water. So there is exactly a corresponding thing in the external world to

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remove any particular want of yours. When you find that it is not possible for you to guide yourself without the help of a teacher, you find that the teacher is also waiting for you. This Teacher is none else than the Lord of the Universe Himself in human form. That is why he has been thus regarded in the Scriptures :—
“ The true Teacher or Guru is Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Siva, the destroyer as well as He is the unmanifested Infinite One or Parabrahma. Therefore we should always be perfectly devoted to him.” So Guru is none else than God Himself. That is why Sri Krishna teaches us in the Gita “ Whenever you want to know what you should do and what you should not, refer to the Scriptures.” Now the Scriptures or the Vedas are God’s own words intended for the guidance of humanity. If by God, we understand the all-pervading Being of infinite wisdom, He is the only being who can be infallible and so the Vedas which have come out of him, as naturally and spontaneously as breath comes out of us,

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can be the only reliable books that can guide us rightly.

By the Scriptures we do not mean the Hindu scriptures only which go by the name of the Vedas, but the Scriptures of the Buddhists, the Parsees, the Jains, the Jews, the Christians, the Mohammedans, etc., each of which is believed by its votaries to be infallible coming directly or indirectly from God Himself. In fact if we make a comparative study of all the scriptures of the world, we find that they do not essentially differ in their teachings. The same promise to confer the highest bliss on all men and women is to be found in all of them. The same renunciation of the little, the limited, has been preached in all of them in order that one may realise the vast, the limitless. There are indeed some minor differences on account of the different tendencies and capacities of men, which demand for each individual a particular method of procedure ; but every such method is intended to bring the highest bliss to each

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and every one of them. Thus the goal is the same, and the more an individual goes near it, the more he finds that the differences are gradually vanishing away. Just as food satisfies the hunger of the body, religion satisfies the hunger of the soul. There are various sorts of food to satisfy the tastes of various men and women all over the world, and a food that may give immense satisfaction to a certain man may be looked upon with horror by another, as the animal food which gives perfect satisfaction to millions of men is looked upon with horror by a strict vegetarian. But all foods whether animal or vegetable, whether cooked in one way or another, serve but one purpose, the satisfaction of hunger, and thus bringing rest for the whole body. The chemical composition of all food-stuffs, however different they may be in appearance, in taste, in smell, in flavour, etc., must be the same, otherwise they cannot serve the same purpose. Hence although they apparently differ, essentially they do not. Exactly the same is the case

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with all the different religions of the world. Essentially they do not differ, otherwise how can they serve the same purpose of bringing peace and bliss to all souls. Again just as some men, who can digest and assimilate some particular sorts of food, which they have learned to take from their parents, may have inherited from them, and thus have been accustomed to take from their babyhood, can neither relish nor assimilate any other sort of food, similarly some souls can only assimilate and thus be benefited by a particular sort of religion which they have inherited from their ancestors and not by any other. So it is not desirable that any one should give up his ancestral religion which is thus natural to him and embrace another, as thereby he would place himself in a wrong path which being unnatural to him, he will not be able to follow with ease and success. Religions, therefore, having come from God for the guidance of humanity, are the only right paths to be followed, paths which alone can bring the greatest amount of happiness here as well as hereafter.

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Morality is based upon human experience. I must be kind towards you if I want you to be kind towards me, for I learn by experience that kindness, love, honesty, hatred, malice, etc. are all reciprocal. Man is an image of his brother-man, reflected as it were in the mirror of creation. Standing before a mirror, if you make faces, the image also will do the same ; if you smile or weep, the image also will smile or weep. If I am sweet and kind to you, you are sure to be sweet and kind to me. Kindness or unkindness in me brings forth kindness or unkindness in others. So I should be good, loving, kind, honest, charitable, etc., if I want that others should be so towards me, and who is there that does not want to be kindly treated by others? Thus morality has to deal with this life only, whereas religion is based upon the eternal nature of man presided over by the one Lord, the one Soul of all souls.

A man may be moral although he may be irreligious and atheistic. The irreligious and moral man is a votary of his living organism only in a

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little restrained sense for the reasons given above, *viz*, he finds out that the enjoyment which is the one aim of his life can be had as long as his body is well preserved. The idea of death horrifies him, and he tries his best to forget it by assigning the cemetery to a distant and unfrequented part of the village or town he lives in. On the other hand, the aspirations of a religious man are not confined to this life alone. The fear of death has not much hold on him. He shapes his present life in such a way as to make his future life more bright, more charming, and more sweet. He also does not transcend the idea of his being an embodied being, he also expects all enjoyments through the instrumentality of his body, he also is a man of many desires like the moral man. But while the moral man lives in his little well of a life, which is of a very precarious nature, the man of religion sails through the ever-expanding river of life which flows on from time without beginning over a channel having innumerable turns of births and deaths always taking him to places more and more

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illuminated and bright, more and more peaceful and calm, more and more boundless and emancipating.

Thus the man of religion not only wants to be happy here but also hereafter, and he finds in his Scriptures that if he wants to be so, he should please and satisfy the gods by offering them those things which they love most. The gods are not different from the Supreme Being who is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe; but each of them is the manifested form of one of His innumerable powers. They are not the personifications of His powers. They themselves are persons emanated from Him, just as innumerable radii emanate from one centre. The limited mind of an ordinary man cannot comprehend the limitless. That is why the limitless One becomes limitedly manifested as each one of these gods. So we learn from the Gita (VII, II, 12) "By offering oblations to the gods, glorify and propitiate them, so that thus propitiated they may shower their blessings

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upon you. Thus mutually satisfying one another you shall realise the greatest good. Propitiated by your oblations the gods will bestow upon you many wished-for enjoyments, and hence the man, who without offering these in grateful acknowledgments to the gods, enjoys them himself, is verily a thief." Thus he who wants to be happy here and hereafter must worship the gods. Such a man directs the course of his life not by the dictates of his senses but by the dictates of the Lord Himself. He becomes religious and with the help of that religion he is not only able to make himself happy here, but expects a far better sort of happiness hereafter. There are various injunctions in the scriptures to enable a man to lead a pure and pious life, by obeying which he acquires great excellence or merit which is called in Sanskrit *Punyam*. With the help of this *Punyam* he, after this life, is exalted to a higher sphere of existence that goes by the name of *Swarga* or Heaven, where misery has no access at any time to break the ceaseless flow of sweet

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enjoyments and where everyone gets whatever he desires.

Is this *Punyam* to last for ever? No. For what has been earned during a limited life must be limited, and as such it only enables the man to stay in Heaven for a limited period of time and if he wants to enjoy heavenly bliss for some more time he must acquire fresh *Punyam* by going down to the world and taking a human birth. This also he does not find to be quite satisfactory. He wants to be incessantly happy and not to be happy now and then. He wants to enjoy happiness in an unbroken manner, but this is nothing but a struggle, and this cannot be his ideal. So again he should struggle in order to recover his lost glory of unbroken bliss and peacefulness and try to realise that highest ideal where no more struggle is necessary and where he can say "I have realised the Infinite One and nothing else there is for me to know. I have escaped the hand of Death once for all. Eternal peace and bliss is mine." So the Vedas no longer satisfy him and he finds

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out the right path for himself in the Vedanta. In the Vedas the object of his happiness is somewhere outside him and he will have to struggle hard in order to get at it. But he learns from the higher scripture, the Vedanta that the object of his happiness is nowhere outside but inside himself. It is a fact that there are certain things in the world outside, which bring out the inner happiness. Happiness is never outside the man, it is inside him.

He finds out the whole universe around him to be made up of two sorts of things friendly and unfriendly. There are certain friendly things in the world and many more unfriendly things. In the presence of a friend we hide nothing, we reveal to him all the secrets of our hearts which expand at his very sight, we reveal our true selves to him, but when an enemy comes we hide our true selves before him, we shrink back in fear and wish him a speedy departure and feel relieved when he leaves us. Sugar is friendly to the tongue and so it will expand at its very

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sight, and will receive it with all eagerness as if a friend has come after a long absence, and the real nature of the self is revealed which is ever-blissful. But the tongue gets contracted and wants to reject the quinine, as if an unfriendly man has come. Thus at that time, the false self comes out which is never blissful and the man feels miserable.

We have seen before, that the real man is *Sachidanandam* or eternally wise and blissful. If so whence come all sorts of miseries to him ? There is no trace of misery in his true nature. It comes from outside his nature. It comes from something which is unfriendly to him. He is spirit, and out of spirit comes bliss. That which is not spirit is matter, so out of matter come all miseries. Hence this is the conclusion—that bliss is to be found only inside ourselves. Try to realise it, if you want to get rid of all fear. The Upanishad also tells the same thing “ The highest bliss or *Brahmanandam* is beyond the reach of word and mind. He who realises it does not fear

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any more." Realise your true self and be free for ever, be free from the hand of ignorance, free from all miseries, free from all sorts of fears, even free from the fear of death.

Mind has a natural tendency to go outside in search after happiness and knowledge. So it is in constant touch with the world which is too inadequate to enable you to realise that infinite bliss, and hence it is beyond the province of mind. You must have to transcend or go beyond it in order to realise *Brahmanandam*. You must not allow it to lord over you, you should bring it under your perfect control. The path lies over the subjugated mind and when this path was pointed out to Arjuna, that noble and heroic prince had to confess his weakness and said "Mind is restless, unruly, strong, difficult to manage. I think its controlment is as highly difficult as that of the wind." In reply to this complaint Sri Krishna said "That the mind is uncontrollable and restless, is beyond all doubts.

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But by practice and renunciation of sensual enjoyments you can have mastery over it." So you see Sri Krishna did not preach any easier method to realise the highest ideal. "There is no other path to take up leading to salvation" says the Upanishad. You must constantly practise to concentrate your mind. Never give it up in despair. The more you will be able to minimise your attachment for sensual enjoyments, the more it will be possible for you to concentrate your mind. As it is impossible to fill up a leaky jar with water, even if you keep it under a water pipe for hours and hours together, so it is impossible to control the mind if you allow it to escape every now and then through the openings of your senses. If you allow your mind to drink unduly of the liquor of sensual enjoyment how can you ever expect to make it calm and sober ?

Once a great Teacher taught his disciples in this wise "How can a bad world come into existence out of God who is absolutely good?" What you regard as bad is not really so; only

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you do not know the use of it. The knife is not a bad thing, but if you hold it on the wrong side you will have to cut your fingers, as the babies do. We are apt to think that lust, anger, greed, the idea of my and mine, pride, and jealousy are enemies to man. They are not so if we know how to use them. Instead of directing these so-called evil propensities towards the ephemeral things of the world, direct them towards God, and you will achieve the greatest victory by realising Him, with the help of one of these. When any one of these ardent passions directed towards God is all-paramount in your mind, all other propensities absolutely disappear from it, and nothing but God remains there. If one is intensely loving towards God, nothing but God can ever be there in his or her mind. He who is extremely angry with God must have him always in his mind as it was the case with Sisupala. He who is intensely greedy for food let him taste that food by taking which he will hunger no more and that is the nectar of wisdom. If the idea of my and mine is the cause of your

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bondage here, regard God as your own, and thus be free from bondage once for all. Be truly proud that you are the son of God, and then you will be able to exalt yourself far above all the potentates of the world, nay, even above all the celestial beings, who are not fully free from, and are still partially slaves to the enjoyments of the senses.

You know the infinitely loving nature of God. He is infinitely kind towards all His children. He loves all equally. There is no partiality in His love, for infinite love cannot be divided. He is always ready to help every one who wants His help. Sanaka, Narada, Suka, Prahlada, Dhruva, etc., are as much His children as you are. They have been able to realise God, why should you also not be able to realise Him ? They were able to conquer their minds, why should you also not be able to do the same ? This sort of jealousy or emulation is not bad, rather it helps you to attain salvation. Valmiki was a highway man and how could he subjugate his mind ? Are you not far

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better than Valmiki before he came to be a sage? We have seen that the highest ideal can be realised by conquering the out-going mind and that can be effected very easily when you clearly understand the littleness of sensual enjoyments and the infinite nature of spiritual bliss. Then it will not be difficult for your ever-ambitious mind to give up the little and aspire for the great, the infinite Lord of the whole universe, the Abode of all-life, all-wisdom, and all-blissfulness. Then alone will all your struggles end, for then alone will all your ideals be realised. Thus we find that even the Vedas are to be renounced and the Vedanta is to be taken up by those who want to save themselves from all limitations. That is why Sri Krishna finds fault with the Vedas and teaches Arjuna accordingly. "The Vedas" says He, "deal with the three limited forms of matter, but you Arjuna, should go beyond all limitations." Indeed the three-fold manifestations of matter, the calm and transparent (Sattvika), the ever active and bound

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(Rajasika) and the opaque and inert (Tamasika) are all limited and hence he who wants to go beyond all limitations must give up the teachings of that science which teaches how to deal with persons, places or things which are limited.

Thus we have seen that renunciation is the natural tendency of all living beings throughout the universe. The mind of every individual is ever ambitious. It is ignorance that confines a man to pleasures that are limited, making him regard them as the highest. But in the daylight of wisdom when the darkness of ignorance entirely disappears, the man is able to know finite as finite and infinite as infinite. Such a man can never remain tied to the finite, he will naturally renounce the little in order to realise the vast, the infinite life, wisdom and bliss. Man is a lover of beauty and so he will naturally love God who is infinitely beautiful. He is a lover of power and who is more powerful than God? Thus when man knows God to be the highest, the best, the most beautiful, the most powerful, the

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wisest, the most loving, the most nearly related to him, more than his father, mother, wife, children, relatives, friends, etc., it is but natural for him to renounce everything for the sake of the Lord. And it is also a fact that wherever there is any conscious movement either in the animal or in the vegetable kingdom, it is a struggle to realise the highest ideal of eternal life, infinite wisdom, and absolute bliss or in other words *Sachidanandam* or God, and until that is realised this struggle will be going on. Sometimes a man may imagine himself to be contented and peaceful, but he mistakes laziness for contentment and peacefulness. Perfect peace and bliss can only be had in God who is always ready to accept you as his own child when you recognise in Him your true Father.

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High above us, there is the zenith which we regard as the highest point in heaven and down below us there is the nadir which we regard as the lowermost point. But what we regard as zenith, the antipodes regard as nadir, *i.e.* what we regard as the highest point in space, the Americans regard as the lowest. So we find that there is no point in space which can be definitely named as the highest or lowest. But is there any point which humanity, as a whole, may regard as the lowest? If so what is that point? We say it must be the centre of the earth, as it is regarded to be such by all humanity. Any point, other than the centre, is more distant from one and less distant from the other side of the globe ; and so, although

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every point in it is in constant motion on account of its ceaseless revolution round the sun, as regards humanity we may regard the centre to be a fixed point equidistant from all the points on the surface of the earth. We are more concerned with humanity than with any other thing in this universe as, in the welfare and progress of humanity, our own welfare and progress are ensured. Thus the proper study of man is man himself. After we have found out a fixed point, the other points are not hard to find. A point which is more distant from it than another should be regarded as higher than it. This lowermost point, the centre of the earth, is also the centre of earthly attraction or gravitation. Every particle of the earth gravitates or tends towards it. This unseen and irresistible force, seated there, unceasingly exerts its powers on all sides and keeps everything in its place. Every dull, dead material body on the surface of the globe has a tendency to go or fall towards it and thus man who is neither a soul nor a dead body but a combina-

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tion of these two has also a tendency to go or fall towards it, and he can only keep his body from falling down by means of the opposite force of self-exertion or soul-force. Whenever this soul-force in him is overpowered by the earth-force, as when he has an irresistible desire to sleep or when he has fallen a victim to any kind of impairing disease, he cannot hold his body erect which must have to fall down then either on a bed or on the bare ground. Let us call this force of gravitation or earth-force, material force and the soul-force, spiritual force.

The colour of matter at rest is dark like that of darkness. If it is a fact that the condition of rest, regarding a certain living being, is its natural condition and when it is restless it is in its unnatural condition (as it is restless only to find out rest) let us call matter at rest to be in its natural condition, and when it is in very high motion let us call it to be in its unnatural condition. We learn from almost all the scriptures of the world that, before the creation, there was darkness everywhere. The undisturbed and

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slumbering particles of matter were perfectly resting, as it were, at the time, after having gone through the arduous process of a previous creation or manifestation. When the all-powerful Will of the Lord brought about disturbance amongst them, on account of the very high motion thus produced, heat and light came into existence, and out of the all-devouring darkness of ignorance, the light of knowledge came forth illuminating a portion of the limitless void. The light that came out of darkness following the all-powerful Will of the Lord cannot be dull, dead and unconscious, as it came into existence, out of the conscious Will, and as cause always enters into the effect, it was conscious and living light or light of knowledge. Thus we see that matter, darkness, ignorance, weakness and misery, are inseparably connected, just as spirit, light, knowledge, power, and bliss are with one another.

The whole earth rotates round its centre which, having no such rotatory motion, may be regarded as fixed and motionless in respect to

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humanity, although it has its orbital motion in respect of the universe. Light may paint the surface of every material body with various colours, as violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, etc., but behind the surface, every material body is perfectly dark in the case of the opaque, and partially in the case of the transparent and translucent bodies. Hence the colour of matter at rest being dark, the central portion of the earth, which has the least motion in it, must be in utter darkness or *tamas*.

We have already seen that man is a combination of matter and spirit. When matter preponderates in him, darkness, ignorance, weakness, and misery naturally mark him as their own ; his tendencies become *Tamasika* or materialistic. He almost entirely forgets his spiritual nature, and identifies himself with his body. All his enjoyments come to him only through his body. With the disturbance of his body, he feels disturbed, and with it at rest he feels himself rested. In fact he worships no other god than his body. With the body he feels

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himself to have been born, with its life he feels himself to live, and with its death he expects to die or be no more. He loves whatever is material and formful, and does not even believe in the existence of what is immaterial, formless or spiritual. He regards his soul to be one of the various manifestations of matter. Just as out of darkness light comes, similarly out of unconscious matter, conscious soul comes into existence. Hence he dotes upon all earthly enjoyments and regards the world as the only reality, and this life to be all in all. He therefore wants to enjoy it at any cost as long as he is allowed to have it. He loves his father, mother, wife, children, relatives, friends and neighbours, because they make him happy. All his hopes, aspirations and ambitions are confined to this world and this life alone. Inaction or laziness, and the state of sound sleep being his two ideals, he does not want to earn his bread by honest labour, and hence turns out to be a thief. Being absolutely selfish, he perpetrates all sorts of evil deeds to satisfy his passions,

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turns out to be a cut-throat and a villain and thus leads a very miserable life. Like an owl he loves darkness, and hence, after his death, he is taken to the abode of darkness, otherwise known as Hell, situated in a portion of the region round the centre of the earth, the Patala Loka, to suffer all sorts of miseries, till he is properly punished for all his past misdeeds, when he is again born in this world. However Tamasika a man may be, his inner nature being blisstul, he cannot like misery; and so, he gradually hates that sort of life which brings misery to him. When he finds that weakness, the offspring of ignorance, making him depend upon everything, makes him miserable, he wants to be independent. He begins to rebel against nature around him which does not want to give him all those things that will make him happy. Thus, by constant struggle, he becomes stronger and stronger. His old Tamasika or lazy nature, he gives up. The spirit in him tries to assert itself and does not want to be subservient to matter. A regular fight goes on between the spirit

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and the matter in him, which goes by the name of activity. He likes to earn his bread by honest labour and hates to be mean and cringing. He wages an incessant war against ignorance knowing that knowledge is power. The mysterious world is before him. He wants to unravel its mystery. He wants to be happy and is able to make himself so by forcing nature to yield him whatever he wants. This partial success in his warfare with nature makes him very hopeful of a complete victory over her in the future and he struggles on right manfully, loves to live, regards his life here as all in all; the earthly enjoyments, honours, and glories become the ideals of his life and thus he identifies himself with his body. His materialistic tendency remains intact. He becomes *Rajasika* or passionately attached to worldly enjoyments and as such must be always active to get them. He has no leisure to put such questions to himself as "Who am I? Am I one with my body? Am I to live after death etc." ?

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But when by constant activity and labour he is able to earn enough money to make himself perfectly comfortable, when he no longer feels the pinchings of want, and when he can afford to give up labour and enjoy rest, his constantly active mind will not remain satisfied with the enjoyments of the flesh and the questions will naturally come to him "Who am I? Am I one with my body? If I am one with it I shall have to die, but I do not want to die; how then, am I to live for ever? How can I avoid death? How can I make myself absolutely free from fear of death and various miseries etc." ? He has now got leisure enough to think upon such problems and, as a result of his constant cogitation, he, ultimately finds out their solutions, helped by the scriptures. He has now become *Sat tvika.* He does not like to remain in darkness any more. He wants light, more light, and hence nothing but the higher regions, which are ever illumined with the lights of myriads of heavenly bodies, can ever satisfy him. He does not like to live on earth where

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light and darkness are equally divided in the course of a year. The little pleasures of the flesh do not satisfy him any more. He wants more substantial, more permanent, sorts of pleasures. His ideas get more and more expanded and he finds that he has no home on the earth, so he longs to go to the higher regions where the heavens are located, whither he is taken up at last by his natural tendencies.

The sages of ancient India have divided the lower regions into seven spheres, the lowermost being *Patala* where living beings that love darkness, such as, Daityas, Danavas, snakes, etc., love to dwell and these are *Tamasika* in their nature. The surface of the earth is the abode of humanity, where light and darkness, spirit and matter, knowledge and ignorance, are incessantly fighting against one another, and hence it is more like a battlefield than like a dwelling-house. Men are generally *Rajasika* in their nature. Above the surface of the earth and below the heavens, the mid air is peopled by Siddhas, Charanas, Vidyadharas, Gandharvas,

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etc. This is called *Bhuvār Loka*, the abode of the demi-gods. *Swarga Loka*, the abode of the gods who are *Sattvika* in their nature, is situated not on this side of the heavens where the stars, the sun, the planets, and the satellites are situated, but on the other side of it beyond the ken of the mortals. There are five heavens one above the other, the lowermost of which is ruled by Indra and inhabited by the gods. When a man finds the earth to be too little and inadequate for him, he propitiates the gods by means of Yagnas or sacrifices; they, in their turn, take him to heaven after his death, having showered upon him many blessings during his earthly life. When wishing to be more expanded he finds out the inadequacy of the sensual pleasures to be found in the lowermost heaven, and thus out-grows it, he is lifted up to higher heavens, where sages who have conquered their senses live. Thus he is gradually lifted up to *Mahar-loka*, *Janaloka*, *Tapoloka*, and *Satyaloka*; the more he wants to shake off ignorance, the

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more he wants to expand himself. Coming to know the impermanency even of Satyaloka, when he wants to realise that which is permanent, changeless, and eternally peaceful, and blissful, he at last renounces that Loka also, and thus saves himself from repeated births and deaths and attains final liberation, rests perpetually in the infinitely blissful presence of the Lord of the whole Universe, the one Omnipotent and Omniscient Being, the Abode of all Bliss, knowing him to be the Soul of his soul, nay the one Soul of all souls. Thus gradually from Tamasika condition, man evolves till he realises perfection. This process is called *Kramamukti* or salvation by evolution. In the highest Loka, that is, Satyaloka or Brahmaloka, the first Paramahansa, Brahma, the creator of the universe, rules. Although he is ever active and is thus Rajasika in his nature still Rajas does not bind him, for he, the first born child of God, was also his first student. From Him he first learnt that the individual soul is not the worker but is an instrument in

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His hand. He was the first to understand his inactive nature amidst all his activities, just as a witness sees another working, himself doing nothing. "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction" says Sri Krishna "such a man of great mental concentration is qualified to do all works." The first created Being was thus able to be the Creator of the universe. Just as a swan has the power to separate milk from water, Brahma had the power to separate truth from falsehood, therefore he is called Paramahansa or the all-knowing swan. He being the first Paramahansa, was the leader of all future Paramahansas, and along with them he has found a safe abode in Brahmaloka. In that land of highest intellectual bliss, amidst all sorts of stupendous activities, Brahma is ever peaceful and calm. When during the time of universal destruction, even *his* abode gets destroyed, the calm and peaceful Lord of Brahmaloka remains beyond the reach of all-destroying time, as peaceful and calm as ever, absorbed in his own

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supreme Self, Narayana, eternally resting on Ananta or Infinity.

But those souls, who do not want to have the least connection with any sort of activity whatever, who want to realise their own infinite nature, do not like to remain even in Brahma-loka as that is also a place which is not permanent, and not free from activities. Such souls merge their individualities in the universal soul of the Supreme Lord, Narayana and become one with Him, or get eternally unified with Him in the bond of Love. That is why Sri Krishna teaches Arjuna "All the Lokas beginning from the highest Brahma Loka come again and again, but when a man comes to me he will have no re-birth any more." So, finding out our lowermost point to be the centre of the earth, we at last find out the lowest condition of the soul as well as its highest. We have also seen that in order to be unconditioned and liberated from repeated births and deaths, the soul will have to go where there is no creation.

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A man going beyond creation directly comes to the Creator as, where there is no creation, there must be He who creates. Many people are apt to think that this idea of Heaven and Hell is merely mythological. Heaven and Hell have no real existence. By heaven, we always understand a blessed and by hell, a miserable condition. These are only localised in two imaginary places which go by the names of heaven and hell; and to support their view they adduce this reason. Let us take for granted the existence of heaven and hell. When I am sleeping, suppose two angels take me up to Heaven and there in that sleeping condition make me live for years and years together. There also angels come and worship me while I am sleeping. After the lapse of that long period in the same state of sleep I am brought back here to my old place on earth and made to wake up. Although I have been living in Heaven for so many years I have no idea of it after awaking. Why? I was in Heaven and still I was not in it; because

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I was not conscious at the time. Where then does Heaven actually exist? It exists in my consciousness or in me. In the same manner where does Hell exist? Let us see. Suppose again, I am sleeping and two men from Hell come out and take me to Hell and there I am punished in many terrible ways while I am sleeping. After some time I am brought back to my old place. Although I have undergone so many punishments in Hell, still I am not able to recall them ; because I was not conscious at the time. Therefore punishments or miseries must be in my consciousness or must be felt by myself. Hence Heaven and Hell only exist in myself and nowhere else.

The argument is all right, as long as man identifies himself with his consciousness. Does he ever do so? Let us see. This consciousness, in which all knowledge exists and but for which no knowledge can ever be, is the same as Brahma or pure consciousness in which the whole creation exists and but for which creation can have no existence. Brahma, being purely

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conscious, knows everything about the entire creation which exists only in it. Human consciousness, confined within the limitations of body and mind, can only illumine inside them, and has no power to go beyond, just as a lamp inside a room, only illumines the room and not outside it. When any one can get rid of these limitations he becomes unconfined and all-pervading, the same as Brahma, the omniscient One. Sruti says "he who knows Brahma, the purely conscious Being, becomes one with it." When a man can identify himself with his consciousness, he becomes a purely conscious being which is the same as Brahma. This is the most difficult of all achievements. None in the entire creation can fully get rid of the limitations of body and mind. That is why Sri Krishna says "there is not a single soul in the world of mortals, nay there is not a single god in the world of gods who is free from the three ties of matter or Prakriti." Bagavan Sri Ramakrishna used to say "You cannot give a durable shape to gold without mixing it with

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a baser metal to form an alloy. Similarly, the infinite soul is naturally so formless that if you want to give a form to it you have to make an alloy of it with matter." So long as this material impurity is there, the limitless soul will have to regard itself as limited. The moment this impurity is got rid of, the soul finds out its limitless nature and becomes free. So, before a man realises his salvation, it is not possible for him to identify himself with his consciousness, he must have to regard himself as formful occupying a certain place in the universe. To such a man, therefore, the whole creation exists with its infernal, intermediate, and celestial quarters, with all their sufferings and enjoyments. It is natural for such a man to believe in the higher and the lower regions and regard the earth as a stationary body round which all the heavenly bodies are moving. To him, therefore, all the various spheres of existence (lokas) which we have just now described must exist, as he would look at everything in relation to himself, not as pure consciousness.

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but as a formful being. Does any man regard his form as imaginary and false? Rather he ignores, not unoften, the very existence of his soul as distinct and separate from his body. He firmly believes himself to be a Mr. So and So, a Hindu or a Christian, a native of this country or that, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, tall or short, dark or fair and so on. He entertains no doubt as to his being all these. Thus, it is impossible for him to give up the idea that he is formful and limited, and even if he understands himself to be eternal, dwelling for a short period of time in his present body, the idea that he was living in various bodies before, and is going to live in many bodies hereafter to satisfy his various and ever-rising desires, cannot but be an undeniable fact to him. And when he associates misery with darkness and happiness with light, and when he knows the abode of darkness to be in the nethermost regions and sees that light or happiness comes from the highermost regions, he naturally aspires to go to the higher regions to be happy,

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as nothing else but happiness is what he wants. Thus, the eternal, yet limited souls must rise up continually to the higher regions, in order that they may be more and more happy. For such souls only, the universe with its higher and lower regions must have to exist, and who can question the reality of the universe? Certainly not he who regards himself as limited in form though he may know himself to be eternal in being.

Now let us view the subject from the standpoint of the Absolute. No point can be definite or fixed in this indefinite space. The centre of the earth may be regarded as the fixed point only in relation to humanity. Whoever has got the least knowledge of Astronomy can understand that the centre of the earth is not a fixed point. So, since there is no definite point in this universe, we cannot say which is high and which is low. Still the ideas are there; how are we to account for them? In answer to such a question we say that we get these ideas of higher and lower regions from our own body. We call that high

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which is towards the direction of our head. We call that low, which is towards the direction of our feet. This, the great seers of ancient India found out. Since apart from the body a man cannot have any conception of *above* and *below*, higher and lower regions are to be sought inside the body and not outside it. Head and heart therefore should be regarded as higher regions, navel and pelvic regions should be regarded as lower ; and if misery is to be found in the lower and bliss in the higher regions of the Macrocosm, the same must be the case with the Microcosm. The ancient seers not only found out the man to be the epitome of the whole universe, but came to know him to be the very root of it. Thus they gave up their search after wisdom in the universe outside and concentrated all their energies to search it out in themselves, inside their own bodies, not with the gross and material knife of the dissection room but with the search light of their subtle, clear and unbiassed mind. And with what result ? The discovery of the highest

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truth, as eternal life, infinite bliss, and all-knowledge. In the body proper, consisting of the head and the trunk they discovered six centres, the six seats of the mind. The lowermost centre they called the *Mula'dhara*, the basis of all the other centres. Then above it in respective order there are *Svadhithana*, *Manipura*, *Ana'hata*, *Visuddha*, and *A'gna*. They found out that as long as the mind remains confined to the three lowermost centres occupying the pelvic regions and the navel, it undergoes all sorts of miseries which make it very restless. Hell was thus localised in the two pelvic centres, *Muladhara* and *Svadhithana*, and earth was localised in *Manipura*, the third centre situated near the region of the navel. Almost all the men of the world along with all the lower animals remain confined in these three lowermost centres. So it is said that "Eating, sleeping, fear and sexual enjoyment, we have in common along with the lower animals." Is it not a fact that most of us lead this sort of animal life? We are apt

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to call them wise who have read many books, and understood them intellectually, but never care to follow the teachings and principles inculcated therein, and direct the energies of their minds to mean and selfish ends, like any ordinary mortal of animal propensities. Sri Ramakrishna used to compare such people with vultures that soar very high, but all the while their eyes are directed downwards in search after rotten carcasses of animals. The truly wise have thus been defined by Bhagavan Sri Krishna "They should be regarded as wise who can regard a scholarly and humble Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a chandala as one and the same (seeing the same Self in all)." Sruti also teaches us "This self can never be realised either by the man who has the power to discuss upon philosophical subjects perfectly well or by him who has an exceptional genius to call his own or by one who has studied many scriptures. He alone is qualified to realise Him, who exclusively longs for Him and nothing else. Before him alone

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this Self reveals His own true self." Just as a man who is starving for some days longs for nothing but food, when one has that sort of longing for God, He shows Himself to him. Such an example is not far to seek ; you have all heard the name of our great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He knew to read and write but little. But because the one longing of his life was to realise God, He was blessed with the vision of the Lord, and His soul got illumined with so much wisdom that now-a-days He is regarded as a true guide to humanity all over the world. What is there in reading many books and learning everything by rote like a parrot ?

Almost all of our modern scholars study many books more for earning money than for getting true wisdom. Moreover, the books which they read teach them, with pompous parade, Agnosticism and Scepticism. What sort of a wise man can we expect out of such studies ? Merely cramming the mind with some facts about the phenomenal universe which looked

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upon as an objective reality will always remain inexplicable, can never bring peace and consolation to any soul that wants the illumination of true knowledge. Thus, the modern man of education is hopelessly thrown into the quagmire of doubts and dangers from which he can never expect to extricate himself. Everywhere he is checked by the irresistible mandate from the unknown "Thus far shalt thou go and no further," in his search after truth. How can his limited ego ever expect to fathom the limitless? Getting blinded by a false pride, the offspring of his ego, he loses his faith in the existence of the Lord of the Universe and thus leads an irresponsible, graceless, and miserable sort of life which more befits an animal than a rational man. Fully identifying himself with his body, he laughs at the very idea of renouncing the enjoyments of the flesh and has no mind to go beyond the three lower centres of his body, the genitalia, the rectum, and the navel. My experience is that faith is to be found more in the illiterate people

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than in the learned scholars now-a-days. These three lower centres in the body make us seize with greediness the enjoyments of the flesh. So long as man remains confined in these centres, he becomes very selfish and blind to the requirements of others and because selfishness is the common characteristic of the lower animals, such a man does not out-grow his animal nature. He who is able to rise beyond selfishness, who has the power to feel for others, who has a philanthropic turn of mind and has the milk of human kindness in him in profusion, can only raise himself up to the fourth centre, the *Ana'hata* localised in the region of his heart. The sufferings of others make him more miserable than his own sufferings. Such a man is called a man of great charity and generosity. Every one looks upon him with reverence and regards him as an extraordinary man. He is regarded as a god on earth. He never lives for himself. The animal propensities have completely left him. The divinity in him has come forth and his face shines like

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that of a god. He sees God in every man and woman of the world and like an humble devotee serves each and every one of them. His love does not remain confined to humanity only, he loves and serves even the lower animals seeing the same God in them. Thus he goes on for some time till by serving the children of God, his love towards Him increases and he comes to know His greatness more and more. When the knowledge of the infinite wisdom, power, and love of God fully grows in him, he comes to know the insignificant nature and littleness of his own self which ultimately wanes away like the moon before the rising sun; and he then puts this question to himself, "Does not the whole world belong to the all-powerful and all-merciful Lord of the universe? Does He not know far better than myself to protect His children? Are not all His ways absolutely right? Who am I to correct and rectify Him? Does He require my help, because He, the all-powerful, cannot manage His own affairs Himself? Why are men miserable? Has God

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made them so? Man reaps the fruit of his past actions. That is why the blind, the lame, etc, suffer and get punished because they did not behave properly in their previous lives. I should not be foolish again to interfere with His affairs, for He the Lord of infinite love, knows far better than myself or any one how to treat His own children kindly; my interference may only bring about a slight disturbance in the eternally unbroken harmony of His all-providing method in managing and governing His own creation. My primary duty, therefore, is to realise Him so that I may be blessed for ever, and then if I am made to work, all my actions will be in entire harmony with His will and not till then. So I must have to make Him my own first, all else must come afterwards."

When you go to worship Sri Ranganatha Swami of Srirangam you find many beggars coming to you for alms. If you go on distributing money or food to them, the more you do so, the more beggars will be coming to

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you ; and there will be no end of them. While you are thus engaged, the temple gate has been shut and you come back home without seeing the Lord. Therefore, you should worship the Lord first and then come back to distribute alms to the poor.

Thus the man of charity gives up all his philanthropic works as he detects his blind ego behind all his actions. He dives deeper and deeper within himself to search the Lord of infinite love, and never stops till he realises Him in the region of his heart. What indescribable bliss comes to him when his soul comes in direct communion with God ! He finds his true father, true mother, true friend and true lover in Him, and he can never turn his eyes away from Him. He has found out his true home at last. His mind cannot think upon anything else at the time, his mouth cannot talk of anything else than his Beloved. He has gone up to the fifth centre, the *Visuddha chakra*, or the centre of absolute purity.

The man must be absolutely pure to go

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there ; what is purtiy? It means only-ness or singleness. When a man's mind is occupied by the one idea of God, when he can only talk about Him and nothing else, he is said to be absolutely pure. God remains eternally bound to him, as the same Lord in His incarnation of Sri Krishna has expressed Himself, "Those people who giving up all other thoughts meditate upon me with exclusive devotion, I serve such men of unbroken meditation by earning and laying by for them." When a man can make himself thus pure, then only, he is qualified to rise up from the fourth to the fifth centre. When once the man goes to this centre he has no inclination to come down and if he is inclined to come down at all, he only descends to the fourth centre. So he has to rise still higher and higher till at last he comes to the sixth centre, the *A'gnachakra*. He who rises up to this sixth chakra sees God directly before him and gets so much merged in the ocean of love towards his most Beloved, that unless his previous karma that has already

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begun to bear its fruit drags him down, or unless he has previously determined to come down, he is never inclined to descend from that highest eminence ; the absolute and all-cementing Love draws him nearer and nearer to Infinity, till after twenty-one days his limited self becomes unified with the Limitless, his individuality loses itself in the Universal Being of the Lord, and becomes one with IT. As long as he remains in this sixth seat he does neither commune with Him mentally nor has the power to speak of Him to anyone, he sees Him directly and infinitely enjoys the beatific vision. If his fruit-bearing (Prarabdha) Karma or his previous determination makes him descend even from that exalted height, he can only come down as far as the fourth centre. Whomever he commands at that time shall have to obey, may he be a man or an angel. Hence the sixth centre is called *A'gnachakra* or the centre of commandment. To elucidate this let me narrate to you a parable of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

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Four friends once determined to search out the Land of Bliss and they were searching for it not for one life but for several lives, till at last in one of their lifelong searches they came across a very high wall. It checked their onward course, and so they determined to scale it. Accordingly they secured a considerable number of strong iron-spikes which one of them began to drive fast partially into the wall one above the other, and thus placing his foot in the projected parts of the nails, began to ascend with the determination to come down after seeing what was behind the wall. But when in this way, he got above, he saw something inside which made him laugh in ecstasy, and not caring to come down to his friends he jumped in. The second man of the party went up by the same path with the same determination and shared the same fate with the first man. The third also never fared better. The fourth, left alone, then went up and saw to his greatest satisfaction, the Land of Bliss for which he has been toiling for so many lives. He also had a

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great desire to fall in like his other comrades, but then he remembered the almost hopeless plights of many people searching for the same place, and who unable to find it, were on the point of giving up the search in despair. Remembering them he resisted the temptation of falling in, and slowly came down to carry this good news to the millions that were toiling for the same end.

From the above parable we learn that very few can resist the almost insurmountable desire of unifying themselves with the Lord, the Abode of Bliss. He who can come down from that glorious height is called an Incarnation of God. All great men of the world who are regarded as incarnations of God by its different nations are men of the above description. They never care for thier own enjoyments. Such great souls alone are qualified to do good to the world. They do not work out of necessity or compulsion like the ordinary man of the world. They work out of unselfish love for humanity ; that is why the infinite and unmani-

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fested Lord of the whole universe is more appreciated, worshipped, and loved in these manifested aspects of Him. Men have erected countless temples, shrines, pagodas, and churches in honour of these formful Gods to whom they will have to remain eternally indebted for the innumerable good they have done, undergoing all sorts of miseries inflicted upon them by those very ungrateful people for whose good alone they lived, laboured, and died.

After having had a clear conception of the higher and lower regions in both their outer and inner aspects, the seers of old were able to achieve the grandest victory over death, ignorance, and misery, by realising Life, Wisdom, and Bliss.

By God we mean these three highest perfections, Eternal Life, All-knowledge, and Infinite Bliss. Your struggles will never come to an end for lives and lives together until you realise these. The seers of old were able to know their infinite self by the irresistible strength of their will ; you also

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can succeed in the same manner if you have as strong a will as they had. What once has been done, may be done several times over.

Says the Sruti, " If you know the highest truth in this life, then you shall really live. But if in this life you do not know it, great shall be the number of deaths you shall have to fall a prey to." May the grace of the Lord enable you to realise the Truth even in this life.

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Before we attempt to find out the locus of the Soul it is desirable to know something about it. What do we understand by the word 'Soul'? Many are apt to confound it with man. Man has a name and a form, a caste and a creed, a father and a mother, etc., while the soul has no such thing. Man lives in the world, while the soul lives in man, or in any living organism whether human, celestial or infernal. Man has a birth and a death, but the soul takes countless births and dies as many times. Hence man cannot be a soul.

If I ask any man "Who are you"? he will spontaneously say "I go by the name of So and So, I am the son of Mr. So and So, etc. Such an answer clearly shows that the first personal pronoun 'I' or 'Ego' is identical with

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man and not with soul. It rises with man and sets with him. Like man, it is bounded on both sides by a birth and a death.

But there seems to be an apparent contradiction to what we have just now said regarding 'Ego' in the following statement of Sri Krishna, "But it is not a fact that myself, yourself, and all these kings never existed before this life, and that all of us are not going to exist hereafter." Here the 'Ego' has been made to overlap the boundary lines of birth and death. But we must remember that the speaker, in this case, is not a man but God, and since God is infinite, His body, mind, ego, soul, and self must be infinite. Because there cannot be more than one infinity, God's body, mind, ego, soul, and self are all one. Later on we find Him distinguishing His Ego from that of His friend "Many births have elapsed of myself, as well as of yourself Arjuna ; I know them all, but you know them not." Here Sri Krishna puts the impassable barriers of birth and death between which lies

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the Ego of man. Thus the Ego is identical with man and not with soul.

In order to correct Arjuna's wrong notion about the soul that dwells in the body, Sri Krishna has described its nature in these glowing words ; and in describing it we find Him using the masculine gender, instead of neuter, as many sages before Him, have done in the Upanishads : " As a man casts away his old and useless clothes, and replaces them with new ones, so the soul that dwells in man, casts away his old and useless bodies, and takes others that are new. Him, the weapons do not cut, the fire does not burn, the water does not wet, and the wind does not dry. He cannot be cut, cannot be burnt, cannot be wet, and cannot be dried. He is ever-existing, all-pervading, changeless, motionless, ever-living, unmanifested, inconceivable, and always the same. This is how the sages describe Him."

So from the Scriptures, we learn that the soul that dwells in man is not finite like him. It has been described to be

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all-pervading, *i.e.*, infinite ; changeless, *i.e.*, absolutely simple and not compound in its nature; ever-living; *i.e.*, ever-conscious or never unconscious and hence all-knowing being infinitely conscious; and always the same, *i.e.* perfectly satisfied, having no want to make it restless or miserable. Thus we find it to be eternally blissful and all-knowing. But the moment we look towards man, exactly the reverse of it we find him to be. The Soul, which makes the existence of man possible, which shines through his ego and mind, and thus brings them into existence, and but for which the organs of sense and activity could not be what they are, in fact which makes up the whole of man, and which is eternally blissful and all-knowing as we have just now learned from the Scriptures, is not to be found in its true colour in man at all, but on the other hand, we find it to be entirely misrepresented by him. How can a man looking at his own physical self ever identify himself with such an infinite Soul ? In so doing, he will have to deny the testimony of all

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his senses, he will have to go against all observations and experiments, and very few people are there now-a-days, who will be ready to sacrifice these undeniable evidences at the altar of the Scriptures. So, naturally the question comes, is there no rational proof to contradict the verdict of the senses, and uphold the affirmations of the Scriptures, regarding not only the true nature of the soul, but the very existence of it? In answer to this question, we say that the Scriptures never contradict reason. It is a fact that the power of reason cannot reach some of the highest flights of the Scriptures, where they deal with matters pertaining to the very being of the supreme, second-less, and Infinite Self, but it has full access to all the mysteries of creation that are not inconceivable by the mind, provided, it has an inclination and a will to unravel them. Human mind being limited, it can only grapple with objects and ideas that are limited; but it is also a fact that with the help of the limited, we can reach the limitless. Just as with the help of a

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river limited between its two banks, we can reach the limitless ocean, in the same manner with the help of the individual soul manifested as man, we can reach the infinite Soul described in the Scriptures. Let us see how we can do that.

Man passes through the three conditions of wakefulness, dream, and sleep in twenty-four hours ; in his wakeful condition he is conscious of the world around him, of events that happened, as well as that are going to happen, *i. e.*, he is conscious of the past, the present, and the future, and whatever takes place or comes to be perceived or conceived by him in these three manifestations of time. So in his wakeful condition he is conscious of various phenomena both physical and mental.

Consciousness is that illumination or light in man which makes him know the countless things and ideas which make up his outer and inner world, and just as by one light many objects are rendered visible, so by one consciousness many objects and ideas are rendered knowable. But for that one consciousness

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nothing can be known. Just as darkness causes everything to be invisible, so unconsciousness makes everything unknowable. Thus all knowledge is based upon one consciousness just as all radii are based upon one centre. Every man has a natural hankering for knowing more and more, and therefore whenever he acquires fresh knowledge, he feels himself greatly satisfied. Since knowledge is possible only in consciousness just as vision is possible only in light, the satisfaction which comes after the acquirement of fresh knowledge is possible only for consciousness and hence satisfaction and consciousness always go hand in hand. From this it can be safely deduced that perfect satisfaction only comes to a man when his consciousness is never opposed to and thus limited by unconsciousness. Boundless or infinite consciousness is therefore inseparably connected with infinite satisfaction or bliss. The all-knowing alone is all-blissful.

Consciousness being only distinct and separate from unconsciousness, it cannot be

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distinguished from itself, its one distinctive feature in all circumstances being its inseparable connection with blissfulness. As water cannot be distinguished from water, so consciousness cannot be distinguished from consciousness.

When man enters the condition of dream, the dream-world is before him and he is conscious of all those things that make up that world. His consciousness persists in that condition and is the same as that which exists in his wakeful condition. But we are apt to think that when he sleeps soundly he becomes unconscious and hence his consciousness ceases to exist at the time. Let us examine this state.

It is a fact, that memory is always connected with past experiences. Whatever we have seen, touched, tasted, smelt, heard of or known before, we can call back or remember and not other things; and in order to perceive and know anything the conscious knower must be there. Whenever we wake up from sound sleep do we not recall or remember that we have slept very soundly? The conscious knower

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must have been there to know it, and then only remembrance or memory is possible. So consciousness persists even in the condition of sound sleep and it is the same as that which exists in the states of wakefulness and dream. In wakeful condition, the physical senses, mind, ego, and consciousness all live and work together, but from the condition of dream the physical senses fall off and the other three persist, and from the condition of sound sleep, the first three fall off and only consciousness persists. Since the whole of man's life is made up of these three conditions and since consciousness never ceases to be in all of them during his whole life-time, consciousness runs on ceaselessly, one and the same all throughout, while the physical senses, the mind and ego, have breaks. These three rise and set like the sun, whereas consciousness neither rises nor sets but continues to be in one and the same manner all throughout, and never changes. There is an innate belief in the uniformity of Nature's works, to be found in every

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man, which he can never shake off, and which has made the existence of scientific knowledge possible. For instance, if a man dissects one human body and finds it to contain a certain number of bones, arteries, veins, muscles, nerves, etc., he cannot help concluding that all human bodies must contain the same number and thus he brings into existence the science of Anatomy. Believing in the uniformity of Nature's works and examining a certain object in Nature for a few days, we at once deduce all those laws under which it acts. Thus if we examine the nature of consciousness for a few days, months, years and even decades, we find it to be changeless, and so we cannot help arriving at the conclusion that its nature is to be one and the same always or to be changeless, and this is the only quality of an eternal and infinite being. For if it were non-eternal, then it would have to be changeful which is not the case, and if it were finite it would be liable to death which cannot be as we have just now seen. Thus consciousness

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in man is eternal and infinite or as it is called in the Upanishads *sat* and on account of its being conscious it is also called *chit*.

Man again has an infinite love for his own being, he wants to be or live, and never wants not to be or die. Death is regarded by him as the greatest misery which he therefore wants to get rid of at any cost. That is why he wants to get rid of lions, tigers, venomous snakes, and all ferocious and destructive animals and even men, by killing them. He loves that which makes him happy and wants to preserve it. Whatever has the power to make him more and more happy, he loves more and more. Hence that which is the abode of all bliss he cannot but love most, and what is that thing which he loves most? Assuredly he loves himself most of all other things and that is why Yagnavalkya instructs Maitreyi, his wife, in this way: "Not for the satisfaction of the husband but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the husband is loved; not for the satisfaction of the wife, but

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for the satisfaction of one's own self, the wife is loved; not for the satisfaction of the sons, but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the sons are loved; not for the satisfaction of wealth, but for the satisfaction of one's own self, wealth is loved; not for the satisfaction of the Bra'hmana, but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the Bra'hmana is loved; not for the satisfaction of the Kshatriya, but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the Kshatriya is loved; not for the satisfaction of the blissful habitations of souls but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the blissful habitations of souls are loved; not for the satisfaction of the gods but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the gods are loved; not for the satisfaction of all the living beings but for the satisfaction of one's own self, all the living beings are loved; not for the satisfaction of the whole universe, but for the satisfaction of one's own self, the whole universe is loved. Therefore my beloved Maitreyi, one's own self should be rightly known after having heard of, well-understood, and profoundly

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and repeatedly meditated upon it, for by hearing, understanding, deeply meditating upon his own self and then realising it, all this, that is not-self, is known." Thus since man loves himself most of all, his self must be the abode of blissfulness or bliss itself which in Sanskrit is called *A'nandam*.

So the consciousness in man is *Sat-Chit-Anandam* or eternally all-knowing and all-blissful, and this is what is called *Parama'tma* or Soul of all souls. But who am I ? Am I distinct and separate from my consciousness. Is not consciousness my very being ? Because unconsciousness overpowers my consciousness during the time of sleep, I do not exist at the time. Hence I and my consciousness are one and identical, and if consciousness is eternally all-knowing and all-blissful, why do I not feel myself to be so ? In answer to this, we say that the 'Ego' indeed is not separate from consciousness, but it is only a portion and not the whole of it as we have seen already. Consciousness is limitless, but the Ego is limited, and as such, its

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knowledge about itself must be limited. Thus we cannot say that the Ego does not know its true nature, in that case, it could not love itself above all other things, but the fact is, as we have already seen, it loves itself most of all and thereby proves its all-blissful nature. Again we cannot say that it knows its true nature fully, in that case it could not have the least desire for any sensual enjoyment, for how can that which is infinitely blissful ever feel any want of enjoyment? So the Ego knows and does not know its true nature simultaneously, just as the father of one of those boys who are chanting a portion of the Vedas in chorus, knows that his son's voice is there in the sound, but does not know to distinguish it from the voices of the other children, which have drowned the voice of his son. Innumerable worldly concerns have been dragging so much this poor little Ego towards themselves, that it has no power to come back to its home inside itself, but remains tied to the world outside with innumerable ropes of attachment. It has no time to think of

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itself even, and how can it ever know its true nature? As it is, it is a perfect misrepresentation of consciousness from which it has its being. Sri Ramakrishna used to illustrate this deplorable condition of the Ego in this way. The little child has got its whole mind to itself, and that is why it is so happy all day long, spends its time in play, and feeling tired, falls asleep. But when it grows up to be a boy or girl, it is sent to school. Then a quarter of his mind the boy is forced to give to his lessons for fear of being punished for his unmindfulness. When he grows up to be a man and gets married, half of his mind goes to his wife, and when after sometime he becomes a father the remainder of his mind goes to his child, and he has no mind remaining, to be given to God. Thus man cannot help becoming a devotee of the world instead of becoming a devotee of God.

It is apparently absurd but really true when I say that God is nearer to you than you are to yourself. Where are you at present? Where your

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mind is, there you must be ; and where is your mind? Scattered all over the world and tied to it so firmly that you deem it almost impossible to bring it back inside yourself. And where is God? He is always there sitting in your heart as we learn from all ancient sages. So God is always inside, and you are always outside yourself or in other words, God is nearer to you than you are to yourself.

So, though this Ego is an offspring of consciousness, still by its associating with the dull, dead, and material world, it has imbibed the qualities of matter more than those of its progenitor. That is why it deems itself to be limited and absolutely imperfect in every way. It is a hungry, thirsty, and passionate being, and as such must have to be restless and active on account of its passions and appetites.

Many people are apt to confound this Ego with Consciousness or the infinite Self, known as Brahma, and in order to save them from committing this egregious and fatal blunder, Sri Sankaracharya very carefully explains the four

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most famous texts from the four Vedas "I am Brahma," "Thou art That," "This self is Brahma," and "Consciousness is Brahma." According to Sri Sankara, we should not understand the texts literally, as in that case absurd meanings will come out of them. How can "I", "Thou", "This self", and "Consciousness" all meaning Ego and thus limited, can ever be equal to or same as Brahma, who is infinite? And yet the Vedas declare this Ego to be the same as the infinite Self or Brahma. Then how to explain them? As in the sentence "This Devadatta is that man" we identify Devadatta with 'that man,' meaning a man that we had seen before, although the latter looked very differently from Devadatta on account of his beard and peculiar dress which the gentleman before us has not got, yet looking at the sameness of age, colour, height, gait, cut of the face etc., we cannot help identifying both of them, rejecting the differences that subsist between them. Similarly rejecting the differences of limitation and limitlessness that exist

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between the Ego and Brahma and looking at the same conscious nature of both, we are naturally led to identify both of them. Ego free from all limitations is the same as Brahma, and so this limitless Ego has been thus described: "This Ego is not a man, not a god, not a *Yaksha*, neither a *Brahmana* nor a *Kshatriya*, neither a *Vaisya* nor a *Sudra*, neither a *Brahmachari* nor a householder, neither an ascetic nor a *Sanyasin*, but it is pure self-consciousness" (Sri Sankara). Led away by the false delusion of sensuality, as long as we shall allow this Ego to be identified with our nearest and dearest relatives and friends, with body, mind, and innumerable desires contained therein, so long it is limited and blind and it has nothing to do with the infinite Self. Step by step it must have to rise up from its extremely limited and narrow state to less limited and broader conditions till at last it becomes unconditioned, unconfined, or limitless. As a tributary loses itself in and becomes one with the river and as the river loses itself in and becomes one with

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the ocean, so the ego should be made to lose itself in and become one with the individual soul that takes bodies after bodies to satisfy its innumerable desires, and this eternal and individual soul should be made to lose itself in and become one with the infinite and universal Soul, or pure one Consciousness eternally all-knowing and all-blissful.

Now we have some idea of the soul that dwells in the body. It is clear that the infinite and universal Soul can be localised nowhere. In Him all the individual souls, all egos, all minds, all living organisms, nay the whole universe exist and He exists in Himself, as He is one without a second. He is absolute and unrelated, beyond space, time, and causation, self-existent and self-conscious, pure and perfect, life itself, and blessedness itself. But what is the locus of the soul that takes body after body in trying to unfold itself?

In the fourth Brahmana of the third chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, it is stated that in the beginning before the creation,

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Self alone existed in the form of a man. Then looking around, He found none but Himself, and finding Himself alone, He got frightened ; then He reflected within Himself " Since there is none besides me, from whom am I to fear"? and then His fear left Him as fear only comes from another and not from one's own self. This is the absolute, the unrelated, and the unconditioned Self who lives in Himself. Then it is stated in the same Brahmana "He did not like to be alone, and wanted a partner and then a portion of His man-form transformed itself into a male-female form, half male and half female. He separated that newly transformed portion of His body from Him and remained unmanifested. Then husband and wife came into existence out of that separated portion. The husband's body was not whole but half, the wife's body was not whole but half. Both together became full. The husband was the void and the wife made the void full. Yagnavalkya has taught this."

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We learn from this how the unrelated appears as related, the unconditioned appears as conditioned, the one appears as two, the whole appears to split itself up into halves, the self-existent unit appears to become two units mutually depending upon each other, the sexless appears as male and female. This is the beginning of creation. The male is the creator and the female is the creation, the male is the unmanifested back-ground, and the female is the manifestation of past, present, and future ; length, breadth and thickness ; form, touch, taste, smell and sound ; speech, action, locomotion, evacuation and enjoyment; thinking, feeling, and willing ; creation, preservation, and destruction; beginning, middle and end ; etc. In fact we cannot imagine creation without a creator, preservation without a preserver and destruction without a destroyer.

Where does creation exist ? She exists in the heart of the Creator as we know that Lakshmi stays in the heart of Narayana. Where does the Creator exist ? He exists in the infinite Self,

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or Consciousness, that goes by the name of Brahma. Where does Brahma exist? He exists in Himself. He is eternally, all-blissful and all-knowing. All-bliss and all-knowledge come from Him alone. He has got the monopoly of them. None else can give bliss and wisdom and if anyone else has the power to give a little of them, he is only the apparent giver, the real giver is Brahma who uses him as His tool. "Whatever is glorious, charming, and sublime," He says in His Incarnation of Sri Krishna, "know that a portion of my power has brought it into existence." When God manifests Himself through a person, then alone, he can make others happy and wise.

If He has got the monopoly of bliss and wisdom and life, and if I and all men and women have an intense longing for them, and if nothing else can satisfy us, then we must have to go to Him. How to go to Him? Where can we find Him out? Let us see. Horses are to be found in stables and not in nests, *i.e.* horses are to be searched where

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horses live and not birds. Milk is to be found in milk and not in water. Salt is to be found in salt alone and not in sugar. So, if Brahma is consciousness, then He can be found only in consciousness and not in unconsciousness. Spirit can be found only in spirit and not in matter.

The world around me is material. Whatever is formful is matter and the world is made up of forms, so it is material. Hence spirit or consciousness cannot be found there. But there are two kinds of forms which make up the world, the animate and the inanimate, the conscious and the unconscious. So consciousness can be found amongst conscious or animated forms which go by the name of animals. And again, amongst animals some are less conscious and some are more. So infinite consciousness should be searched amongst those animals who are most conscious. Such animals go by the name of man. Amongst men some are less conscious, some are more. So infinite consciousness should be searched

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amongst men who are most conscious. Such men are the great Teachers, the great Gurus, whom we call the Incarnations of God, Rishis, Sages and Seers, like Rama, Krishna, Siva, Suka, Sanaka, Narada, Vyasa, Vasishtha, Parasara, Valmiki, Buddha, Moses, Christ, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Mahomet, Zoroaster, Jina, Confucius, and many others. We must have to sit at the feet of one of such great Teachers in order to realise infinite consciousness. Every man is born with such a Teacher, for a man calls himself, either a Hindu, a Bauddha, a Jaina, a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Zoroastrian, a Confucian, or a Judaist, etc. It is always desirable to be guided by one such great Teacher. We inherit religious propensities along with many other propensities from our parents and ancestors, and since almost each and every one of us is born with a certain great Teacher whom his father, grandfather etc. inherited from their ancestors, therefore it is but natural for him to love, revere, worship and follow that particular Teacher.

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Now let us examine in brief the teachings of some of these great Teachers. First of all, let us see what the great Indian sages of yore have to teach us. Out of their pure and spotless minds the Upanishads which are regarded as constituting the heads of all the Vedas, have emanated. So by quoting a few out of many similar passages from some of the Upanishads we shall know the minds of those great sages :

“He who realises Brahma realises the highest. Therefore it has been said, Brahma is eternal, infinite and all-knowledge. He who knows Him hidden in the *sanctum sanctorum* situated in the recess of his heart, he enjoys all that is desirable along with the all-knowing Brahma.” (Taittiriya, Brahmanandavalli).

“That effulgent and inconceivable Being is very vast, and at the same time subtler than the subtlest. He is most distant of all the distant things, and at the same time very near; to those who know Him, He is hidden in the recess of the heart.” (First Section of the Third Mundaka).

“The inner self, a manikin, as big as a

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thumb, resides in the hearts of all men. Him you should carefully separate from your body just as the middle blade of a grass should be very carefully separated from it. Know Him to be spotless and eternal. (Katha, Valli VI. 17).

“The Self which is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, remains hidden in the recess of the heart of a living being. He who is free from all attachments, realises through His grace the Lord, who is Majesty itself, and is not reachable by ritual”. (Swetasvatara, III).

“He is One, has all things under his control, is the Soul of all souls, and makes His one Self appear as many. Those quiet people who see Him inside their own selves enjoy eternal bliss and not others” (Katha V. 12).

Thus according to the ancient sages Brahma is to be realised in the region of the heart. Bhagavan Sri Krishna also teaches “God lives in the heart of all living beings, and He with the help of His Maya directs the movement of all of them who are seated in the machines of their bodies.” Every Hindu, of whatever de-

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nomination he may be, tries to see God in his heart, sitting squattingly in the posture of meditation, closing all his organs of sense as well as those of activity.

Buddha realised Nirvana inside Himself. Christ has taught "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke XVII, 21). Mahomet saw God in the seventh Heaven sitting in the cave of Mount Hara, closing his eyes, and so he must have seen Him inside himself.

Thus from the teachings and realisation of great Teachers we find that God is to be realised inside ourselves, in the regions of our hearts. So much we learn from them after hearing their teachings carefully and deeply pondering over them. Then the search should begin in right earnest inside my own Ego. This "I" may be very limited, may seem to be very blind, very helpless, yet it is nothing but a bit of pure consciousness, and I have absolute mastery over it, as it is one with myself. So if Brahma is to be searched in consciousness, the nearest one is my own Ego. Hence I should not think

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poorly about myself as through me alone
Brahma can be realised.

That this Ego is not one, with my body or mind can be easily understood by studying the phenomenon of sleep. When I am awake I am in every portion of my body. But when I fall asleep I am not in any one of my external organs either of sense or of activity. This requires no proof. Now if I were one and the same as my body, separation in that case would be impossible. How can I separate me from myself? I can always separate or distinguish me from that which is not myself. Hence the organs of sense and those of activity which make up the exterior portion of my whole living organism are distinct and separate from me. But this does not prove that I am distinct from my mind. The same mind is to be found when I dream in the course of my sleep. So mind is there even in the condition of my sleep. But I do not always dream when I sleep. There is dreamless sleep called sound sleep. I, at that time, do not think, feel, and will; not

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only that, I do not remember anything at all. Not only the world, including my own body, as well as the charming forms of my wife, and children, but even the very memory of it has left me. Both of them have slipped off from me. So the mind is not there. But where am I at the time ? Have I left the body ? If that were the case, the body would be dead. You may call the dead body of a man ever so loudly, the body is never going to be alive and conscious. But that is not the case with a sleeping man. He is somewhere in the remote corner of his body taking rest, just as a man desiring to take rest wants to avoid all sorts of disturbances and so leaves the street-side rooms of his house and goes to a solitary corner remote from the bustle of crowds that pass by in the street. If at that time a friend comes to see having an urgent news to communicate to him, he must have to give loud calls, before he can make him aware of his presence. But any amount of loud call or ringing the call-bell would never bring the man if he were not at home. In the same

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manner, you must have to give loud calls, nay, sometimes you must push and shake him in order to wake him up, or bring him back to his mind and his senses. Hence when I sleep I simply take rest in a solitary place in some corner of my body. Let me try to find out that corner. It is a fact, that I do not stay in any one of the ten external organs which make up the exterior portion of my body. It is also a fact, that I do not live in my brain which is the instrument of mind, as I do not think, feel, will, and remember anything. So I do not stay in the head, the hands and the legs. Then I must be living somewhere inside the trunk as I do not live in any of my sense organs. Even in my wakeful condition I do not live in the alimentary canal as I have nothing to do with the digestion of my food. I know to cook all sorts of savoury dishes, I know how to put them into the cavity of my mouth, I know how to relish and swallow them. But afterwards, how out of the food-stuff living blood is manufactured, I know nothing about, not even the greatest

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Scientist of our time. No man, however clever he may be in many respects, has the power to produce one drop of living blood out of the most nourishing food. That power belongs to the Creator who in that capacity goes by the name of *Vaisvanara* (Gita XV, 14). What is my relationship with Him? Just as a cooly's relationship is with the master-builder. The cooly is ordered to bring bricks, mortar, lime, water, etc., and is paid by him for his services. The Master-builder of this body is inside me and His orders come in the forms of hunger and thirst and I must have to obey him, and he pays my daily wages in the form of gustatory enjoyments. Hence the whole of the alimentary canal, and the various supplementary organs such as salivary glands, peptic glands, the liver, the pancreas, the spleen, the villi, the lymphatic glands, the excretory organs, &c., are presided over by God even in my wakeful condition, much more they should be so when I sleep soundly. Thus in sleep, my search after me confines me to the thoracic as I have no place in the

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abdominal region. Again the organ of respiration mostly acts independently of my will even when I am awake. So, in sleep it certainly acts independently of me, and hence my search ultimately confines me in the heart, as I have no place in the lungs. So, when I sleep I am made to hide myself in the recess of my heart for rest, away from all the workshops of my body which in my absence remain closed.

Physiologists regard the processes of digestion, secretion, excretion, respiration, &c., as due to a system of nerve-cells in the cord termed the reflex centre and an efferent motor nerve, the whole constituting what is called the reflex arc. Actions which take place independently of the will of man inside the body are all due to this reflex arc and thus most of these people think that there is no necessity of bringing in a God to preside over them. Such a baseless and absurd conclusion is the result of sheer materialistic fanaticism. The one purpose of self-preservation individual as well as racial, pervades the whole life of man. Whatever he does

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physically and mentally is done with a purpose and that is to make him live a happy life as long as he can, and after his death, he wants his children, grand children, etc. to run the same course through all times. Every action done by him has a will behind it, and every will presupposes a conscious being in whom it is centred. The actions, that are done independently of his will inside his body serve the same purpose of preserving his individual and racial self, and hence all those actions are purposeful, and as such voluntary, and therefore there must be a conscious being in whom that volition can be centred. Since they are done independently of the will of man, they must be done by the will of one who is higher than man, who is his preserver and master. This being goes by the name of God.

Now we have found out the real home of Ego to be the heart. The other portions of the body are merely its workshop. We have also seen that it is independent of body and mind as it can live without them in sleep, a condition

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in which it is absolutely helpless. In the wakeful condition it gets temporary victory over unconscious matter ; in the condition of sleep the latter gets temporary victory over it; and so all throughout the life-time of a man, the struggle is going on between Ego and matter which alternately get victory over each other. But if we consider the case of Ego a little more carefully, we shall come to know that matter has got the better of it. In the wakeful condition it is not so much helpless, as it is when sleeping. But does it not then identify itself with the body which is material on account of its ignorance? Does it know that it is independent of its body and mind? Does it know its true home to be in the heart? It has no such idea at all. Hence identifying itself with matter it has become more material and foolish than spiritual and wise. Such is the inveteracy of this ignorance, that more than ninety nine per cent of humanity cannot even imagine themselves as independent of body even for a moment. Even men, who are wise and who

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have been able to distinguish theoretically the nature of Ego from that of body, cannot practically separate the former from the latter. For, although man's true home may be the heart, he has totally forgotten it and so has made a home for himself in this place of sojourn, the world. Thus tied to his false home, the earth, he has no power to come back to his true home voluntarily. Only by the irresistible power of sleep, which makes him perfectly helpless, and mostly unconscious, he is forced to go there every day for some hours. Of his own accord, he never cares to go, and even if he cares, he finds that he has no power to go. Thus caught in the net-work of earthly attachments he can never go out of the world, and even after his death, he eagerly takes his birth in it, not for once, but for several times, for although he may imagine himself to be mortal, thereby his immortal and eternal nature can never suffer. With whatever intensity I may imagine a rope to be a snake, the rope is never going to be a snake on account of my imagina-

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tion. So man can never perish after death. He only follows the bend of his mind after he casts off his body, and as his mind is a lover of the world, to world he must have to come again and again as long as he will have a love for it.

Why does he love the world ? Because he imagines that it has got everything in it to make him perfectly happy. Indeed it has a very charming exterior. In it, he finds his parents, wife, children, friends, relatives, neighbours, almost all enjoyable things, name, fame, respect, money, property, love, residence, etc., which charm him so much that he has no mind to give it up. He gets so much attached to it, that one life-time appears to him to be absolutely inadequate to enjoy it, and so again and again he returns to it and is again and again forced to go away from it by death. But he is not destined to taste the sweet fruit from this tree of the world always. Some very bitter fruits he has to taste although he hates them; and gradually his false dreams begin to disappear. It no longer appears to him to be a heaven. Be-

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hind the so-called love, he finds selfishness. behind name, fame, wealth etc., he finds anxiety and pain, behind his home, he finds impermanency, behind knowledge, he finds insurmountable ignorance, behind enjoyment, he finds a greater quantity of misery, and behind life, he detects the most abominable and fearful apparition of Death. He then puts such questions to himself, "I love to live always, where is that eternal Life? I want to be always happy. Where is that eternal enjoyment? I wish to know everything. Where is that omniscience? Certainly these are not to be found here. Then where must I search for them?" He puts these questions to himself, and all his fellowmen, but finds no answer. At last the Scriptures come to his aid. They tell him in unequivocal language that death does not end his existence, that he is not one and the same as his body, that he is a soul dwelling in the body, that he is eternal by his very nature, that this is not the only body in which he is dwelling and that he dwelt in countless bodies before and is going to

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dwell in countless bodies hereafter. This, he feels to be a very consoling news to him. The very idea that he is eternal by his nature has removed a great load of anxiety and fear from his back. The helpless, weak, timorous, miserable, hopeless, and little Ego has developed itself into a Soul. It is no longer a poor little thing. Death is no longer a great bugbear to him. He is full of hopes and aspirations. Life has got a meaning to him; it no longer appears to him as meaningless and accidental. He thus feels himself immensely relieved.

The Scriptures also point out to him a place where he can live for a very great length of time enjoying all sorts of desirable things, if he leads a life according to their injunctions. He does so, and as a result he goes to those blissful abodes after finishing his terms of life here. He goes to higher and higher abodes, each more permanent than the lower ones, till he reaches the highest, which, although it is most permanent of all the places

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below, is yet not eternal. Eternal peace and bliss which he longs so much for cannot be found even in that blissful place, which is called Satyaloka or Brahmaloaka.

Where can he find eternal peace ? The Vedas cannot illumine him on the subject. Beyond the five higher spheres, the abodes of all blissful souls they have no power to go. He longs for illumination, when the Vedanta comes to his help and tells him "Everlasting peace and bliss, my boy, is to be sought inside and not outside yourself" He takes the hint, and tries to go inside himself, but finds that it is more easy for him to be outside than inside himself. But because he has weighed the enjoyments of the whole universe in balance and found them wanting, he does not give up the attempt and the more he gets defeated, the more he takes courage, till at last, he succeeds in going within himself in the recess of his heart. The moment he goes there, all limitations fall off from him. He is no longer bound by his body and mind. He feels himself

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absolutely unconfined and free. He was searching for eternal life, all-blissfulness and all-knowledge outside himself, not knowing that all these are to be found only in him and nowhere else. He no longer struggles, all his struggles have come to an end once for all. He has realised God inside his heart, inside himself. The Ego has reached the highest rung of the ladder of evolution and merged in infinite bliss shouts forth "*Aham Brahmasmi*" "I am the eternal, all-blissful and all-knowing Brahman" and loses itself, and becomes one with Him.

This is how the Ego realises salvation. But some souls are there who do not take up this method. They do not care to go to all the higher Lokas in order to know their hollow and imperfect nature. In this world and in this life, with the help of a true Teacher, properly using their power of discrimination they are able to understand what is real and what is unreal, what is eternal and infinite, and what is non-eternal and finite, and thus knowing their self

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to be the only reality amidst all the unrealities that make up the universe, the only eternal and infinite Being amidst all the non-eternal and finite entities, try to dive deep within themselves, and discover their own true nature. Although at first they have to experience almost insurmountable difficulties in conquering their minds, yet with the help of their intense devotion towards their Gurus, they gradually put down their Ego, and then their individuality which distinguishes them and keeps them separate from the Lord, the infinite Soul of the entire Cosmos. When thus they are able to put down their Egos and individual souls by breaking down their limitations the Universal Soul comes to take the place of the two. When the walls of Egoism and individuality are thrown down, the enclosed becomes unclosed, the confined becomes unconfined, the limited becomes limitless. Nothing new comes into existence, only that which used to be regarded as limited is found out to be limitless and hence absolutely free.

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The permanent seat of Ego is the heart. But as we have seen in our previous discourse, it is tied to the three lower centres of the body and as such has completely forgotten its true home. Thus tied down, it can only stay in the external portion of the body with which it fully identifies itself. In this way it sometimes becomes happy and sometimes unhappy, sometimes conscious and sometimes unconscious, sometimes pure, good, honest, calm, hopeful, loving, sweet, kind etc., and sometimes impure, bad, dishonest, restless, hasty, harsh, unkind, etc. Thus it leads a very changeful and miserable sort of life buffeted by these pairs of opposites. It cannot be always happy, pure, and good, although it may have a desire to be so. The only course left to it, if it wants to be permanently happy, pure and good, is to go beyond these pairs. Is it possible for it to do so? Let us see.

We have found out the true seat of Ego, to be the heart, which it knows nothing about. It is simply seated there, in spite of its ignorance

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about the place, and hence how can it have, any control over it? But we must have to say that it presides over the whole of the nervous system, for without it, the nerves are absolutely powerless, as we have seen to be the case in the condition of sound sleep, when all the sensory and motor nerves are perfectly inactive. The moment Ego comes back to them, they are all able to work, the senses are able to sense, the organs of activity are able to be active and the mind is able to think, feel, will, and remember. So Ego is the rightful master of the entire nervous system, and if it cannot bring it under its control, the cause is to be sought in its own sheer weakness and nothing else. The Ego has no control over the heart which works perfectly well even when it sleeps soundly. Who does at that time direct the movement of the heart, and through its ceaseless contractions and expansions preside over the circulation of the blood all over the body? It is God. "When all the inner and outer organs of the body are sleeping, He who

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keeps awake and goes on producing the things that they desire most, is the pure One. He is Brahma. He is described in all the Scriptures as the one deathless Being. All the spheres exist in Him. He is beyond all, none can go beyond Him. This is what is He'. (Katha V, 8.)

Blood is the intermediate substance that unites matter with soul. The material world gets united with the soul through the medium of blood. Out of the world comes food, and out of food God produces blood, stores it up in the heart, circulates it all over the body and thus fills all the organs with energy to do their respective functions.

Thus we have seen that God presides over the heart and all the vessels that emanate from it with their innumerable ramifications, the lungs and the whole of the alimentary canal ; and the soul presides over the whole of the nervous system. When the Ego lives in the three lower centres, it goes by the name of 'man' when it lives in the heart, it goes by the name of 'soul' and when it ultimately unifies itself, with the Lord

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either by means of love or by means of discrimination, it goes by the name of Brahma.

Let us now see how the Ego can rise up towards the heart. Sri Krishna says "people who are attached to sensuality and power and whose minds have been thus misled by them do not possess that one-pointed mind which is fit for concentration" (Gita II, 44). All the nerves ending in our senses and organs of activity are clamouring for enjoyments which do not always come. Thus they make man very restless and miserable. All his physical and mental energies necessarily become out-going, and lie scattered all over the world to which they remain tied with countless ropes of attachment. That is why it is said by the same great Teacher "One man out of thousands struggles to realise salvation, and out of many such great men who struggle to be saved, one knows my true nature" (Gita VII, 3).

If I am to make a vertical section of my body through its middle, one half will be almost exactly the counterpart of the other and the

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plane of section will exactly divide the spinal cord into two, passing through its central canal filled up with a fluid called cerebro-spinal fluid. This minute canal of the spinal cord is continued throughout its entire length. The spinal cord is connected with the brain through the medium of the Bulb (Medulla Oblongata), and it terminates below about the lower border of the first lumbar vertebra opposite to the navel. According to Padma Puranam (Swarga Khanda XXVII) the coiled up spiritual energy, called *Kundalini* sleeps there in man whose sensual propensities do not require her service. Tied to the three lower centres of his body, he dissipates all his energies by his vain struggles outside himself in search after false pleasures, false life, and false knowledge. When after repeated failures and repeated experiences of various sorts of miseries he is roused up at last to know that his senses are not his friends, that he should not give undue liberty to them, that liberty of his senses brings slavery to himself, that by subduing and controlling them

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he actually becomes more powerful than the greatest conquerors of the world, who although they may have conquered vast territories have not the power to conquer sensuality and that the so-called pleasures of the senses preceded and followed by miseries, are really miseries in the garb of pleasures, he successfully rebels against these false friends and comes out victorious and free. No longer the world appears to him to be the only real thing ; it appears to him to be a vast golgotha, an endless cemetery and a horribly extensive crematorium and he laughs at the very idea of building a permanent home in this palace ground of Death. The ties of earthly attachments snap of their own accord, and the man, ~~for~~ the first time, knows what calmness is. The world slowly passes off from him like a dream. He no longer wishes to flow out of himself along the path of his motor and sensory nerves both on his right side and on his left. His central nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord having in it the roots of all the nerves, that carry

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him away to the land of Ignorance and Death, both on its right side and on its left, he naturally wants to avoid, as not only he has no liking for the land but looks towards it with abhorrence and fear. So he has no longer any leaning either to the right (Pingala) or to the left side (Ida) of his cerebro-spinal system. He does not waver either towards this side or that, and all his previous energies, which he used to dissipate before, in vain search after pleasure, gather themselves up in the third centre (Manipura) where Kundalini (Spiritual Energy) lies sleeping, and serve to wake her up. Thus roused up from her long slumber, and equipped with those new energies she begins her upward march in search after her Lord, the infinite and eternal Spirit, taking the man along with her. Thus the man is gradually lifted up through the minute canal (Sushumna) of the spinal cord towards the region of his heart. The more he rises up, the more all limitations fall off from him one after another till at last passing through *Anahata* and *Visuddha* through the

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path of Sushumna he gets into the fourth ventricle (A'gna Chakra), opposite to the region lying between the two eyebrows, and almost loses himself at the site of the infinite glory of the eternal Spirit, and then passing through a small foramen, that pierces the piece of pia mater which forms a part of its roof, goes beyond the pairs of cerebral lobes which constitute the brain, the centre of almost all activities, to the peaceful abode of Brahma' (the Creator). When he thus passes into the sub-arachnoid region (Brahmaloka) full of cerebro-spinal fluid, and a network of fibrous tissue, it appears to him, like an inverted lotus of myriad petals, on account of its hemispherical concavity. Under this lotus he sees the brain floating, in which he discovers Consciousness (Siva) seated, united in love with Energy (Sakti) and thus giving birth to Will that creates, preserves and destroys. In this exalted position of a peaceful and quiet witness, he realises his all-perfect and infinite nature and thus becomes liberated.

This onward movement of Ego from the seat

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of *Kundalini* to the Lotus of myriad petals has been found out to be of five kinds, either like that of an ant, a fish, a snake, a frog, or a monkey according to the intensity of its desire to realise the goal.

Thus we learn from our ancient sages, "One hundred and one canals have emanated from the heart, one of them has gone beyond the cerebrum piercing through it. When a man goes up by that, he becomes immortal. Other canals going in various directions cause repeated births and deaths." (Katha VI. 16).

This is the usual method of realising the highest Truth. But the soul being really infinite cannot have any motion, for how can infinity go from one place to another having no outside and so nowhere to go to *? Hence whenever motion

* Says Sri Sankara :—"The wise man who by realising himself to be Brahma, the absolutely one without a second, has rent asunder the ties of ignorance, etc., and who even in his lifetime has thus become one with Him, has not to move from one place to another. This we have just now learned from the Sruti which says, 'In this life he realises Brahma' and also in another place the same Sruti says, 'His vital energies never go out ; having

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are born of bliss, live in bliss, go in search for bliss, and ultimately merge into it. This is what is called the 'Wisdom of Bhrigu and Varuna' (Taittiriya III, 6). There is no atheist who does not want to be blissful, and if God is bliss he is a theist and not an atheist.

Everyone is in search after happiness, but he is searching it in wrong directions, in trying to satisfy the cravings of his senses, in getting money, name, earthly power, etc., and so he is constantly restless. Says the Sruti "Man does not live by his in-going and out-going breaths, but on account of Him in whom they exist." Again, "The Manikin who sends the in-going breath upwards and out-going breath downwards is seated in the middle. Him all the gods worship." So the Lord sits in the middle neither in the right nor in the left, neither in front nor behind, neither above nor below. He occupies that central point in the heart from which He directs the centripetal and centrifugal forces that keep up the continuous on-flow of life. That blessed man alone

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is qualified to realise Him, who is free from pride, ignorance and the evils of attachment, who always meditates upon the true nature of Self, has no earthly desire and is free from the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, honour and insult, profit and loss, etc. and not a slave to them. Sri Ramakrishna says "As long as the bee is outside the lotus, so long it will have to fly round and round and buzz, but once it gets into the flower, and tastes the honey there, both its wanderings and buzzings cease. So, as long as man remains outside the lotus of his heart, he has to wander in search of pleasure in vain, but once he goes inside it and tastes the nectar of divine communion, all his wanderings cease once for all."

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